

Issues and Options Paper

COUNTRYSIDE LIVING OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE AUCKLAND REGION

1. EXISTING PLANNING PROVISIONS for COUNTRYSIDE LIVING

1.1 RODNEY

The Rodney District Plan, which was notified in November 2000, has progressively been made operative since January 2009. The last five chapters became operative on 29 July 2011.

The Rodney Section of the plan provides for two main countryside living rural zones – Countryside Living Rural (CLR) and Countryside Living Town (CLT). As can be seen from the table included as **Attachment 1**, the CLR zone provides for a minimum average site size of 2ha while the CLT zone provides for a minimum of 1 – 1.5 hectares based on a sliding scale based on the size of the parent site. Titles created in other rural zones are able to be transferred into the CLT zone.

The CLT zone is described by the plan as:

The land in this Zone represents the rural land close to existing settlements which is capable of being developed for countryside living activities without losing its essential rural character. The Zone exists in the immediate vicinity of:

- (a) Wellsford;
- (b) Matakana;
- (c) Warkworth; *PC 133*
- (d) Algies Bay;
- (e) Kaukapakapa;
- (f) Helensville;
- (g) Kumeu/Huapai.

The proximity to towns enables convenient access to urban type services such as schools, convenience shopping, community centres and employment and reduces the need for extensive vehicle travel. It is not intended that this Zone be a transition stage to a more intensive urban type subdivision and settlement pattern.

It is anticipated that a rural character will be retained in these areas in terms of allowing sites that are large enough to enable the construction of a dwelling and accessory buildings whilst maintaining areas of open space between dwellings and sufficient land area so that animals may be grazed, trees planted and a range of rural activities undertaken. Activities that are noxious or would be likely to generate adverse effects that could not be contained on sites of the size provided for are either restricted from, or not provided for within the zone. This recognises the primary purpose of the zone in providing for countryside living opportunities whilst maintaining a rural character.



The CLR zone is described by the plan as:

This Zone is applied to several locations throughout the District which have been identified for countryside living opportunities including part-time farming. The locations to which this Zone applies are in the vicinity of:

- (a) Puhoi;*
- (b) Stillwater - Dairy Flat - Redvale - Coatesville - Riverhead;*
- (c) Parakai - Helensville;*
- (d) Waimauku (Hinaiu Road/School Road);*
- (e) Waimauku (Taylor Road).*
- (f) Okura*

Much of the land within this Zone is relatively close to urban Auckland.

The land within the Zone is mainly characterised by an already highly fragmented subdivision pattern. The land is being used primarily for countryside living purposes combined with some part time or hobby farming. In many instances the income generated from the land is minimal, with one or more of those living on the land retaining urban based employment.

The physical character of the area is typically one of small paddocks, relatively numerous and in many cases large dwellings, and a limited number of farm buildings. The land is largely compromised for conventional farming because of the already small site sizes.

The Zone also contains the Okura Catchment which drains broadly northwards to the Okura estuary which in turn forms part of the Long Bay / Okura Marine Reserve. The Okura Catchment is sensitive to the effects of land use and development activities which can adversely impact on the water quality of the Okura estuary and marine reserve. Accordingly a separate policy area has been identified for the Okura Catchment within the Countryside Living Rural Zone.

There are a number of other rural zones in the Rodney District – namely General Rural, East Coast Rural, Landscape Protection Rural, Dune Lakes, Kawau Island and the Islands General zone. These zones provide for the creation of rural residential sites on an ad-hoc basis through the protection of significant natural features, the creation of esplanade reserves on sites specifically listed in the Plan, the creation of additional public reserve land on sites specifically listed in the Plan, as well as significant land rehabilitation and enhancement planting. Sites may also be created for the purposes of providing for household units on Maori Land.

Within the Settlement Policy Area of the Kawau Island Zone subdivision of low intensity settlement sites is provided for. These settlement sites are required to have a minimum site size of 4000m². It is noted that Chapter 8 - Residential also includes a Low Intensity Residential zone and a Landscape Protection Residential zone. The minimum site sizes in these zones range from 4000m² to 8000m².

Point Wells - Omaha Flats
Policy Area -

PC 63

Nancy
Robertshaw.



There are four rural zones within North Shore City – Rural 1, Rural 2, Rural 3, Rural 3A, Rural 4(i) and Rural 4(ii).

The minimum lot size for subdivision within the Rural 1-3 and 4(i) zones is generally 2 hectares, while the minimum lot size for sites within the Rural 4(ii) is 4 hectares. Refer to table included as **Attachment 1** for further information on lot sizes provided for.

The Rural 1 zone is described as:

The Rural 1 zone applies to the extensive area of rural land located in the Paremoremo valley. The land is predominantly in pasture but also contains areas of horticulture and scattered wood-lots. Land of higher quality soils is limited to the southern, flatter part of the zone adjacent to the prison complex. Although most properties are 4 hectares or less in area, some larger farms remain. Most of the smaller properties are used as 'rural residential' blocks and farmed on a part-time basis. A recent survey of the Paremoremo valley revealed that only a proportion of household income is derived from the land, and that land in smaller blocks is likely to be as proportionately productive as land in larger blocks.

Objectives and policies for the zone are centred around maintaining the rural lifestyle of the valley. Management of lifestyle blocks small enough to enable good pastoral land management practices to be adopted on a part-time basis, and yet large enough to achieve a productive use of the land and retain the open rural landscape is considered to be important. Also important is the need to control development activities which have the potential to adversely affect the landscape and, in particular, the coastal areas of the upper Waitemata Harbour.¹

The Rural 2 zone is described as:

The Rural 2 Landscape Protection zone applies to land of high natural value and comprises the Albany Heights area (both sides of State Highway 1), the Greenhithe, Te Wharau and Paremoremo escarpments and land in the Glenvar Road/East Coast Road vicinity. These areas have:

- *Visual significance to the city and the local area*
- *Good quality native bush*
- *Good regeneration potential for native species*
- *High wildlife value.*

The integrity of the native bush and its continued progression towards mature forest is dependent on withstanding fragmentation, encroachment of invasive species, effects of weather, edge effects through clearing for access, buildings and other development activities. A continuation of bush cover is also necessary for it to function as a wildlife corridor, enabling recolonisation of areas as well as providing for the full range of food sources and other needs to maintain viable populations of some wide-ranging animal species.

¹ See page 13 of Section 18 of the North Shore District Plan.



The escarpments themselves provide an important visual amenity as continuous green backdrops to the more urbanised areas of the city.

The policies aim to maintain these ecological and amenity values by limiting encroachments into the bush and restricting the dominance of buildings.²

The Rural 3 zone is described as:

The Rural 3 zone and its subzone, Rural 3A (to which all the Rural 3 provisions apply except the subdivision controls) are distinguished from the Rural 2 zone in recognition of the variable bush cover and include:

- *The Ridge Road escarpment, Paremoremo, which, although used extensively for pastoral farming in recent times, now comprises a mixture of pasture, scrub and regenerating native bush. The land is generally steep and broken, provides an attractive landscape as viewed from Paremoremo Road and contributes significantly to the amenities of the area (Rural 3)*
- *A portion of the Schnapper Rock Road escarpment, which is affected by significant slope and stability problems, contains mostly pasture but does include some areas of good native bush (Rural 3)*
- *A small area of Greenhithe, on the southern side of Upper Harbour Drive, and the land in the vicinity of The Avenue, Albany, which have patchy bush cover, less likelihood of slope and stability problems and a low level of visual significance (Rural 3A).*

These areas have:

- *Moderate to low regeneration potential without active management ‘*
- *Moderate wildlife values*
- *Some pockets of good quality native bush.*

The policies aim to provide incentives such as increased development opportunities in clear areas or areas covered predominantly with exotic vegetation, and a wider range of land uses than in the Rural 2 zone, in order to achieve the active management of areas of predominantly native bush. Fencing from stock, clearance of invasive weeds, control of pests and revegetation are effective management practices for enhancing regenerating native bush, and will be conditions of covenanting.

The Rural 4 zone is described as:

The Rural 4 zone applies to the North Shore City part of the Okura catchment.

.....

1. Rural 4 (i) - Land Generally West of Okura Village

This subzone comprises two areas. Firstly, the land west of Okura River Road contains the steepest slopes in the North Shore City part of the Okura catchment and a large proportion of the area has been identified as containing significant landscape features. The area also has the highest landscape sensitivity. The majority of the landscape units

² See pages 13 and 14 of Section 18 of the North Shore District Plan



identified in the 1995 LA4 study have moderate landscape sensitivity (ratings of 3-4). Landscape units 7, 9, & 10 however have high landscape sensitivity. Units 9 & 10 are both located west of Okura River Road, whilst unit 7 is immediately south of Okura Village. Secondly, the land between Vaughan's Road and the Okura Village area has a mix of moderate slopes, largely in and around the stream valleys and flatter land. Significant landscape features comprise the regenerating bush focused in and around the stream valleys. The area has moderate - low landscape sensitivity.

A 2 ha average lot size with a minimum lot size of 5000 sqm is provided for as a limited discretionary activity in this subzone. The minimum lot size will assist in reducing the length of driveways/right-of-ways required to service new lots created by subdivision by enabling the siting of dwellings in close proximity, whilst the average lot size will ensure that the overall rural character is retained.

2. Rural 4(ii) Land Generally East of Okura Village

This area generally comprises land with moderate to gentle slopes. Significant landscape features include the coastal margins, foreslopes and primary ridgelines. Very little regenerating native bush is present in the area. The area was identified in the Okura Catchment Landscape Study (1999) as a Rural Residential Zone with a recommended minimum lot size of 2 ha. A 4 ha minimum lot size is provided for as a limited discretionary activity in the subzone.

1.3 WAITAKERE

Within the Waitakere City plan zones are referred to as 'environments'. There are a number of 'environments' within the Plan that provide for countryside living type development. These are as follows:

- **Countryside Environment** which includes those areas to the north of the urban area which form the rural/pastoral landscape. This 'environment' provides for subdivision to a minimum site size of 4ha.
- **Foothills Environment** which includes the mixed landscape of the eastern foothills catchments of Oratia, Opanuku, Swanson and upper Kumeu streams, excluding the relatively continuous bush cover of the upper catchments and ridges. This 'environment' provides for subdivision to a minimum site size of 4ha unless the site is within the Penihana South Land in which case the minimum average site area is 1ha.
- **Waitakere Ranges Environment** which includes the bush-covered areas of the Waitakere Ranges, and the west coast and Manukau coast where natural elements and wilderness character dominate. It incorporates the outstanding coastal and Waitakere Ranges landscapes. This 'environment' provides for subdivision to a minimum average site area of 4 hectares.

It is noted that on 8 April 2008 the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area received royal assent. This legislation recognises the national, regional, and local significance of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area and promotes the protection and enhancement of its heritage features for present and future generations.



The Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 details the relationship between it and the Resource Management Act 1991. The Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 requires that a Regional Policy Statement and the Waitakere District Plan give effect to its purpose and objectives.

The following 'special areas' also provide for a limited amount of countryside living development:

- Waiatarua Parklands Large Property Management Area;
- Wainamu Large Property Management Area
- Te Henga Large Property Management Area
- Bethells Large Property Management Area

The concept plans for these 'special areas' are included as **Attachment 4**.

1.4 HAURAKI GULF ISLANDS

The District Plan within the former Auckland Council is broken down into three sections with one of those being the Hauraki Gulf Islands section. There is no countryside living type development provided for in the Central and Isthmus Sections of the Auckland City Council District Plan because these areas cover the metropolitan / urban area of Auckland City.

The Hauraki Gulf Islands section of the plan covers the Hauraki Gulf Islands and includes more than 65 islands with the largest being Waiheke and Great Barrier. It is relevant to state that many of the islands, including tracts of Waiheke and significant areas of Great Barrier Island are in public ownership and have reserve status. These areas are therefore 'unavailable' for countryside living development.

The Rural zones within the Hauraki Gulf Islands plan provide for the majority of countryside living type development. Rural 1 (landscape amenity) zone generally provides for a minimum site area of 3.5ha, Rural 2 (western landscape) zone provides for minimum site area of 5ha outside of Thompsons Point and a minimum site area of 4ha within Thompsons Point while the Rural 3 (Rakino) zone provides for a minimum site area of 3ha however requires the revegetation of at least 30% of the site.

The Landform 3 (alluvial flats) zone also provides for countryside living type development by allowing a minimum site area of 3.5ha.

1.5 MANUKAU

The Manukau District Plan was approved by Manukau City Council on 26th September 2002 and became operative on 21st October 2002.

There are a number of zones within the plan which provide for Countryside Living type development, these are as follows:

- Rural 1 Special Policy Area: This special policy area covers an area of land in the Whitford to Beachlands corridor. The plan states that it:

is identified because of its proximity to the Pine Harbour Marina, the settlement of Beachlands and the metropolitan area and has been under pressure for



development. It is also an area where it is desirable to retain extensive areas of rural open space. To recognise this combination of factors “Comprehensive countryside living development” is provided as a discretionary activity. This enables a greater density of dwellings by clustering while retaining and securing the remaining areas of properties as open space which could be utilised as golf courses, reserve or operating farms.³

This zone provides for subdivision of lots between 0.15 – 2.0 hectares.

▪ **Rural 2:** The plan states that:

The Rural 2 zone is a countryside living zone designed to concentrate part-time lifestyle small holdings farming in a particular area in order to protect the resources and values of the wider rural area.

...

The zone is located in two areas of the City — Flatbush and Whitford. The Flatbush area is located between the Future Urban Development zone and the Rural 3 zone. The Whitford area comprises two peninsulas which lie in close physical proximity to the urban edge.

...

Subdivision within the zone is based on an appropriate area for part-time farming activity. Such a basis still allows the development of permitted full-time farming activities within the zone. It may be particularly suitable for intensive indoor and outdoor cropping activities. A minimum subdivision size of 1.8 hectares is allowed within the zone. The average lot size of 4 hectares is designed to promote a degree of lot size variation within the zone. This will also assist in maintaining rural character and landscape qualities of the areas.⁴

▪ **Rural 3:** The plan states that:

The Rural 3 zone is a countryside living zone which acts as a transition between the urban and rural areas. The zone is a low density countryside living zone on the urban fringe.

....

In order to preserve the amenity values and semi-rural character of the area, there is a minimum lot size of 5000m².⁵ = 0.5ha.

▪ **Rural 4:** The plan states that:

The Rural 4 zone covers an area with a unique set of factors which need to be managed in a particular way to sustain the resources of the area. This zone comprises the Mangemangeroa Valley and an area to the east between Whitford

³ Refer to page 19 of Chapter 12 of the Manukau District Plan

⁴ Refer to page 20 of Chapter 12 of the Manukau District Plan

⁵ Refer to page 21 of Chapter 12 of the Manukau District Plan



Road and Sandstone Road. This area is located close to the urban area on the eastern side of the Point View Drive ridge, beyond which lies the metropolitan part of Manukau City.

A minimum subdivision size of 1 hectare is allowed with a requirement for an average lot size of 2 hectares. This is designed to promote a range of lot sizes within the zone, and assist in the maintenance of rural character and landscape qualities while offering flexibility to address the constraints identified above.⁶

Whitford Rural Area

In addition to the rural zones above is the Whitford Rural area. With respect to this area the plan notes:

While the Whitford Rural Area is located within the rural area of Manukau, its proximity near to the urban edge (Howick, Botany and Flat Bush), the Pine Harbour Marina and the coastal edge (the Whitford Embayment) means that it is a highly desirable location for countryside living development. The characteristics of the Whitford Rural Area are highly valued by existing residents and desired by those who wish to live in and enjoy a rural/coastal environment close to the Auckland metropolitan area.

The Manukau Proposed Second Reviewed District Scheme 1989 first introduced a countryside living zone, the Rural 2 zone, into the Whitford Catchment. Continued demand for countryside living subsequently led to the introduction of further zones within Whitford in the form of the Rural 3 and Rural 4 zones in the Manukau Proposed District Plan 1995.

The opportunity for creating rural-residential lots within these zones has been readily taken up by many landowners and there is limited opportunity for any further countryside living development under these zones as they apply to the Whitford Catchment. The opportunity has been extended to allow for countryside living development within the Whitford Rural Area. Countryside living development is to be intermixed with more traditional rural land use activities such as agriculture and horticulture in order to retain the rural outlook and associated rural amenity values of the area. The establishment of countryside living therefore utilises the existing features of the Whitford Rural Area in terms of its proximity to important services and employment opportunities afforded in the nearby urban area and its coastal and rural outlook.⁷

The Whitford Rural area comprises two zones – *Whitford Rural A zone* and *Whitford Rural B zone*. The maximum carrying capacity of the Whitford Rural area has been identified at 925 household units, including existing and possible new household units. In simple terms, it has been assessed that carefully managed development at a density of 1 household unit per 3.5 hectares of land in the Whitford Rural A Zone; and 1 household unit per 5 hectares of land in the Whitford Rural B Zone, plus a limited number of further lots provided for under the "bonus lot" provisions, will enable development to occur in a manner that does not constitute an unacceptable change in character, or result in a significant loss in rural amenity values within the Whitford Rural Area. The total number of household units that may be provided through these mechanisms is not expected to exceed 925 household units in the combined Whitford Rural A and Whitford Rural B Zones.

⁶ Refer to page 21 of Chapter 12 of the Manukau District Plan

⁷ Refer to page 4 of Chapter 12A of the Manukau District Plan



Mangere-Puhinui Rural Area

The Mangere–Puhinui rural area is situated at the western extremity of the City and is outside the Metropolitan Urban Limits. The area is defined by the urban limits of the City to the east and north, and by the Manukau Harbour to the west and south; it is broken up into relatively small pockets of rural land areas which are each bordered by residential or business areas.

The Mangere-Puhinui Rural Area is broken down into two zones – Mangere-Puhinui Rural Zone and Mangere-Puhinui Heritage Zone.

The intention of the Mangere–Puhinui zone is that it will protect the rural character of the Mangere–Puhinui area. The proximity of the Mangere–Puhinui area to the urban area of the City means there is considerable pressure for business activity development, rather than the pressures largely for countryside living which the eastern rural area faces.

The Mangere–Puhinui Heritage Zone encompasses those rural areas which, in addition to the general values of the Mangere–Puhinui area of soils generally of high quality, have high landscape values, and significant natural and/or cultural heritage values.

Both zones within the Mangere-Puhinui Rural area provide for the creation of one rural residential site, between 0.15 to 1.0 hectares, for each 20 hectare minimum existing lot.

Flatbush

Another area of growth within Manukau is the Flat Bush area. This area covers approximately 1730 hectares of land adjacent to the southern boundary of the Auckland Regional metropolitan urban limits. Manukau City Council identified the area as suitable for a mixture of urban and semi-urban development.

Clevedon Village – Proposed Plan Change 32

Clevedon is a rural village situated on the Wairoa River.

The Clevedon Rural zone is situated at the outer edges of the Clevedon Structure Plan area. The purpose of the zone is to provide for a range of part time farming activities from which produce can support local activities, such as the Clevedon Farmers' Market. The zone provides for small rural holdings as a transition between the new residential area and the wider rural area beyond. It is envisaged that these land holdings can enable lifestyle farming and other rural activities.

Subdivision within the zone is based on an appropriate area for part-time farming activity. The minimum subdivision size of 4 hectares still allows development of a range of rural activities within the zone.

1.6 PAPAKURA

The Council's District Plan became operative on 16 June 1999.

Decisions were released on 5th August 2009 to the Proposed Plan Change 13 – The Rural Plan Change. We understand that these provisions are now beyond challenge but that final appeals have yet to be finally resolved.



This rural plan change provides a number of zones, namely Countryside Living zone, Future Urban zone, Hingaia Education zone, Hunua Hills zone, Karaka Centre zone, Rural Plains zone and Rural Reserve zone.

Countryside Living subdivision is only provided for within the Countryside Living zone and enables the creation of 1 hectare lots. Parent lots are therefore required to have an area of at least 2 hectares to be eligible for this type of subdivision.

It is noted that where a lot within the Rural Plains zone, Countryside Living zone, Future Urban zone, or Hunua Hills zone contains all or part of a Significant Natural Feature Area (SNA), Natural Feature Protection Lot subdivision provides for the creation of a 0.25ha lot provided that the entirety of the SNA on the parent lot is protected. Similar to Natural Feature Lot subdivision, Riparian Lot subdivision provides for the creation of a 0.25ha lot where the parent lot is bounded by, or bisected by, a Priority Riparian Linkage. That part of the parent lot contained inside a parallel line measured 20m from the bank of the watercourse forming the Priority Riparian Linkage must be protected in order to be eligible for the creation of a Riparian Lot.

There is no rural strategy or rural growth study that has been undertaken in Papakura. It is however noted that providing for future growth under the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy within the Papakura District means that the current population of approximately 42,000 will grow to approximately 94,000 by 2050. The Growth Strategy proposes that this growth be accommodated in the following manner: 12,000 (23%) in existing rural and urban residential areas, 5,000 (10%) in the Papakura Central Area, and 35,000 (67%) in the growth areas.

1.7 FRANKLIN

The Franklin Operative District Plan contains a Rural-Residential zone. The plan states that:

Rural-residential" areas are separately zoned because they offer a particular lifestyle option and they are generally on land which is not suited to conventional development and servicing.⁸

It is noted that the provisions relating to this zone are contained within the residential chapters of the plan. This Rural Residential zone provides for the creation of sites with minimum site areas between 2500 – 8000m² with an average of no less than 3000m².

A Village Zone is also provided for. This zone largely provides for low density residential development with sites in the vicinity of 2,500m² – 5000m². However the parts of the Village Zone identified as Village Growth Area A have a minimum site size requirement of 1 hectare.

Within Franklin there is also a Rural Plan Change, formally known as Plan Change 14; it is a comprehensive replacement of the existing sections relating to rural areas in the Operative Franklin District Plan. A dedicated Rural Countryside Living Zone has been identified by Plan Change 14 in the vicinity of Runciman; the rules relating to this zone have not yet been released and are subject to ongoing mediations.

⁸ Refer to page 9 of Chapter 19 of the Operative Franklin District Plan



Limited opportunities for the creation of rural residential lots are provided for the wider rural zones though the 'conservation lot' rules which provide for subdivision on the basis of the protection of natural features.

2. ISSUES

2.1 AUCKLAND PLAN

The draft Auckland Plan was released for public consultation on 20 September 2011. The submission period closed on 31 October 2011.

Chapter 9 of the Plan relates to the rural areas of Auckland.

The strategic direction in relation to rural areas is to *"keep rural Auckland productive, protected and environmentally sound"*. The targets identified to meet the strategic direction include:

- *By 2010, 90% of lifestyle subdivision occurs only in the rural lifestyle, mixed rural and bush living areas.*
- *Between 2013 and 2020, no more than 10% of all rural subdivision will be in the rural production, rural coastal and islands activity areas.*

It goes onto state that:

"Rural Auckland is subject to a range of pressures, such as population growth, demand for rural living and rural experiences, diminishing and stressed ecology and natural systems, These pressures, along with changing land values, create tensions between different activities and values, but also create opportunities such as locally grown food, tourism, recreation and productive activities made possible by proximity to urban Auckland".

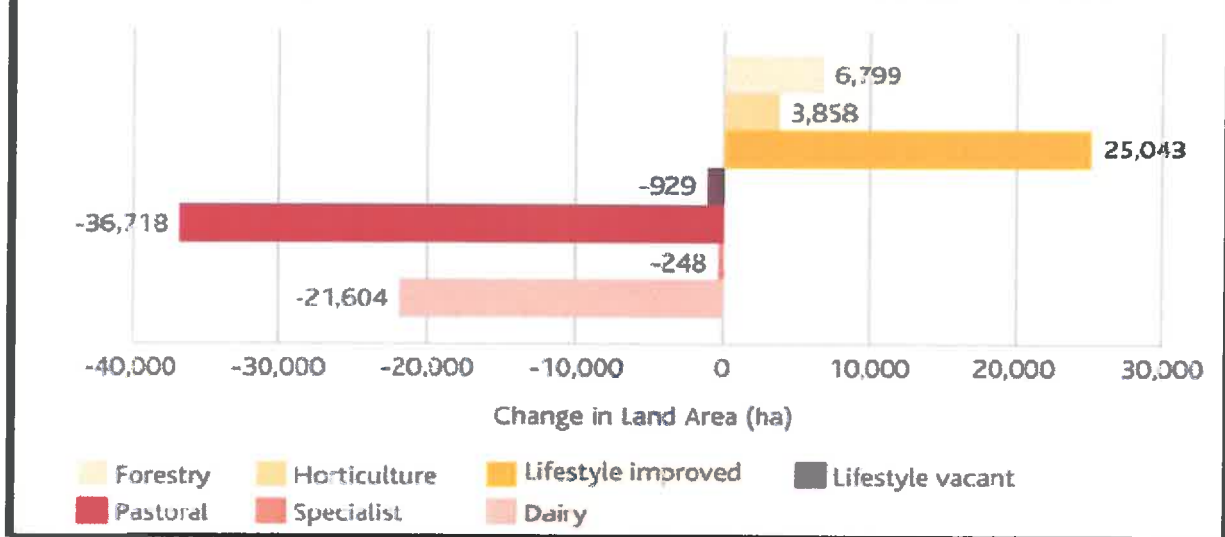
The plan notes the downsides of growth to be:

"the long term consequences of prolific subdivision across rural areas, the fragmentation of productive land, domestication and commercialisation of rural landscapes, introduction of sensitive land uses into working environments and inefficient use of developmental land"

The figure below shows that traditional pastoral and dairy farming is becoming less prevalent across the region and the land area occupied by rural lifestyle blocks has significantly increased.



Figure 9.1 – Changes to area of land in rural valuation categories 1996-2010



The Plan states that a new Rural Urban Boundary (RUB) will identify the long term limit to potential urban growth.

The plan identifies priorities. Priority 1 is to “create a sustainable balance between environmental protection, rural production and activities connected to the rural environment”. This involves the encouragement of growth and urban development to be focused in satellite towns and rural and coastal towns and discourage growth in other rural areas.

Priority 2 is to “support rural settlements, living and communities”. The Plan therefore steers future population and business growth in our rural areas to two significant satellite towns, and to a lesser extent in particular rural and coastal towns, rather than through scattered subdivision of rural land or the conversion of potentially productive land to country living. Some limited and scale-appropriate growth will, over time, also occur in smaller rural and coastal villages where it is of benefit to those communities.

These priorities give a context for the future of Auckland’s rural areas. The map below outlines a broad strategy for the future of rural areas within Auckland (refer to Attachment 8 for a larger copy):





The broad rural strategy plan above categorises the rural areas into a number of activity areas – the area reflective of countryside living type development is the “country living” activity area. The plan provides the following comment in regards to the country living area:

Country Living Area Description

Areas close to rural towns and urban areas:

- *Highly fragmented land*
- *Lifestyle development with good amenity*
- *Hobby scale farming and productive sites*
- *Roadside stalls and commercial activity.*



Country Living Area Future Outcomes

Future outcomes sought for these areas:

- Range of rural lifestyle development choices
- Can absorb demand for rural subdivision, rather than subdividing more sensitive and productive areas
- Limiting effects of country living on rural production, waterways, the natural environment and wider natural landscape and the spread of further country living areas
- Enhanced greenways and recreation links
- Uses supporting equine, horticulture, viticulture, environmental tourism and recreation activities, training facilities, food processing, animal and plant science, markets, small backyard industries, studios and home occupations.

2.1 AUCKLAND REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Auckland Regional Policy Statement (ARPS) is a statement about managing the use, development and protection of the natural and physical resources of the Region. It sets in place the policy for promoting the sustainable management of these resources.

Part 2 of the ARPS sets out the regional overview and strategic direction. It discusses the issues associated with urban expansion across the region and states:

West Auckland

The Waitakere foothills are an important visual foreground to the bush clad hills. Development beyond the Hobsonville Ridge would need to take account of the pollution-sensitive upper Waitemata Harbour, a regionally significant estuarine area. Development in the Kumeu, Oratia, Opanuku and Swanson catchments would need to address the potential for effects on or by flooding in those catchments. Expansion westwards may also give rise to the need to consider the requirements for the operation of the Whenuapai and Hobsonville airports and to balance these against the benefits of further urban development in this area.

North Shore and Hibiscus Coast

Expansion beyond Glenvar Road and the Albany ridge would give rise to the need to protect the quality of the Okura estuary and Weiti shoreline. Consideration would need to be given to the requirements for continued operation of Dairy Flat airfield and to balance these against the benefits of further urban development in this area. Consideration will also need to be given to the costs and benefits of maintaining a visual separation between North Shore and the Hibiscus Coast. The soil types and the steep slopes encountered in parts of the northern area mean that thorough geo-technical investigations will be necessary before structure plans for urban expansion are completed.

South Auckland

The prime land in this area should be protected as far as is possible as a resource for the benefit of future generations. Any proposed development in the Clevedon Valley and Drury localities would need to take account of flooding potential in this area. Any proposed development in the Clevedon Valley area would need to take account of the deep peat soils and high water table that exist in parts of this area. Consideration would need to be given to requirements for the continued operation of Ardmore airfield and to



balance these against the benefits of further urban development in this area. Before any southward expansion of urban development occurs, consideration will need to be given to potential adverse effects on the ecology of the Pahurehure Inlet and on the south shore of the Manukau Harbour, and effects on Maori cultural values and the Kaawa formation aquifer

The South Mangere Puhinui Area

This area has been placed outside the metropolitan urban limits, in order to enable the continued operation of the

Auckland International Airport and the Mangere Sewage Treatment Plant and to protect potential new urban development from the adverse effects arising from these operations. In addition, this exclusion will protect regionally significant heritage values (including the Puhinui estuary and wildlife areas) and features of significance to Iwi, and will protect new urban development from adverse environmental effects arising from the operation of existing quarries.

The Gulf Islands

Any proposed expansion of urban development on any of the islands needs to take into account the environmental and servicing constraints that apply in these areas: the relative isolation, lack of transport, infrastructure, employment and social services; the obligation to preserve the unique natural character of the coastal environment; to protect the islands' outstanding natural features, landscapes and areas of significant indigenous vegetation and to conserve the rare and precious habitats for indigenous fauna.

On Waiheke, urban development is limited to the western end of the island in recognition of the significant landscape values and natural environment of eastern Waiheke. Any urban expansion on Waiheke should reflect the pattern of the existing village settlements and the rural buffers between them, and (in addition to the factors above) the desirability of keeping the Gulf-related slopes at the western end of the island free of urban development to protect their landscape values.⁹

In rural areas, the Strategic Direction seeks to sustainably manage the resources of rural areas, and to avoid prematurely foreclosing future options for accommodating the Region's urban growth needs.

Subsection 3 of Policy 2.6.1 which relates to urban growth management is particularly relevant; it states:

Countryside living (see Appendix D) may be provided for in rural areas to the extent that provision will:

- give effect to Part II of the Act and*
- be consistent with the Strategic Direction, and with the relevant provisions of Chapters 3 to 18 inclusive of this RPS and*
- take into account and make appropriate provision for the following matters:*
 - (i) The extent to which natural resources are protected and or enhanced;*
 - (ii) the avoidance of significant adverse effects (including cumulative adverse effects) on:*

⁹ Refer to page 6, Section 2 of the ARPS



- (a) *the environmental values protected by defined limits to metropolitan Auckland and defined limits of rural or coastal settlements*
- (b) *the safe and efficient operation of existing regional infrastructure*
- (c) *the necessary upgrading of existing regional infrastructure*
- (d) *the provision of new regional infrastructure*
- (e) *the rural character of the region.*

Where significant adverse effects cannot be avoided, they shall be mitigated or remedied.

- (iii) *Avoiding prematurely foreclosing, or compromising options for accommodating the further growth and development of urban areas.*
- (iv) *The avoidance, remediation or mitigation of significant adverse effects on the regional roading network.*
- (v) *Avoidance of the creation of conflicts between quarrying (and similar activities dependent on locationally specific natural resources) and other incompatible activities.*
- (vi) *Avoidance of conflicts between incompatible activities. Where such conflicts cannot be avoided they shall be remedied or mitigated.*
- (vii) *Minimising the loss of versatility and productive potential of soil resources. Where it is necessary for the better achievement of the purposes of the RM Act to compromise the versatility and/or productivity of the soil resource, the greatest protection shall be given to the most versatile soils.¹⁰*

The reasons behind the above policy are outlined within the ARPS as follows:

The provision of Countryside living can also assist in achieving positive environmental effects. An evaluation of Policy 2.6.1-3. (ii) shall include consideration as to whether providing for countryside living may offer benefits, by enabling environmental degradation which has already occurred to be remedied, or by enhancing the quality of the environment (for example, through revegetation of riparian strips, or fencing and formal protection of important remaining areas of native vegetation).

Policy 2.6.1 Urban Growth Management establishes the matters that need to be considered when addressing the issue of urban growth. Countryside living has the potential to undermine any urban management policies or methods that may arise from consideration of Policy 2.6.1. For example the expansion of a particular settlement in a certain direction may be controlled in order to preserve an area of open space. Any provision for Countryside living should be subject to the same assessment.

An evaluation of Policy 2.6.1-3(iii (b)) shall include consideration as to whether providing for countryside living may prejudice the safe and efficient operation of existing infrastructure. For example, countryside living adjoining or close to a regionally significant airfield, even at low densities, can result in conflicts arising.

The provision of countryside living can change the landscape and character of an area from one of open space to a more intimate and intense and less open character.

The provision of countryside living may prevent opportunities for future urban expansion. Prior to identifying countryside living opportunities, particularly those adjoining urban areas, an assessment will be required as to the preferred form of development in any

¹⁰ Refer to pages 18 and 19 within Section 2 of the ARPS



given area. This should include consideration of whether urban development may be the more appropriate option. This will require integration with the relevant settlement growth strategy. (refer Method 2.6.2.6(b)) Where urban growth is the preferred option for the future use of that land consideration should be given to ensuring compatibility with Council's rating policies.

The provision of countryside living results in people who are often still dependent on commuting to regional centres living in those areas. This can add to the increasing pressure on the regional roading system. In assessing the effects on the regional roading system consideration needs to be given to cumulative effects (in combination with other development opportunities) including cross boundary implications.

Countryside living can result in conflicts between the expectations of people living in the area for lifestyle and the production based activities occurring in these areas. One way of mitigating these conflicts is to confine countryside living to specific areas and hence reduce the points of contact. Where countryside living is provided by way of scattered opportunities throughout a rural area the potential for conflict may be greater.

The policy and methods do not specify how countryside living shall be provided, for example whether it be by way of defined areas or by way of scattered opportunities or by some other method. Neither is the extent of countryside living that is appropriate specified. However, consideration must be given to the cumulative effects that provision of countryside living will have in conjunction with other developments (including other countryside living opportunities, and urban living opportunities) both within the district and where appropriate within the Region.

If the life-supporting capacity of versatile soils is valued for future generations and options exist for directing development onto poorer soils, countryside living should be located on the poorer soils and the versatile soils avoided.

It is also expected that structure plans be prepared to guide the development of defined Countryside living areas so that adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated. (Method 2.6.2-7) This may offer a means of giving effect at a local level to Part II of the Act, and to achieving the outcomes which are referenced in Policy 2.6.1-3.¹¹

Appendix D to the ARPS is the definitions section. The following definitions are considered to be of relevance:

'Countryside Living' is defined as:

Low density residential development on rural land. It includes the concepts of rural residential development, scattered rural residential lots, farmlets, residential bush lots, retirement lots, large-lot residential development and the like. It is similar to low density residential development where it occurs within urban areas.

Urban Area is defined as:

the area included with the metropolitan urban limits as shown on Map Series 1, and the areas included within the urban zones of rural or coastal settlements.

¹¹ Refer to page 23 and 24 of Section 2 of the ARPS



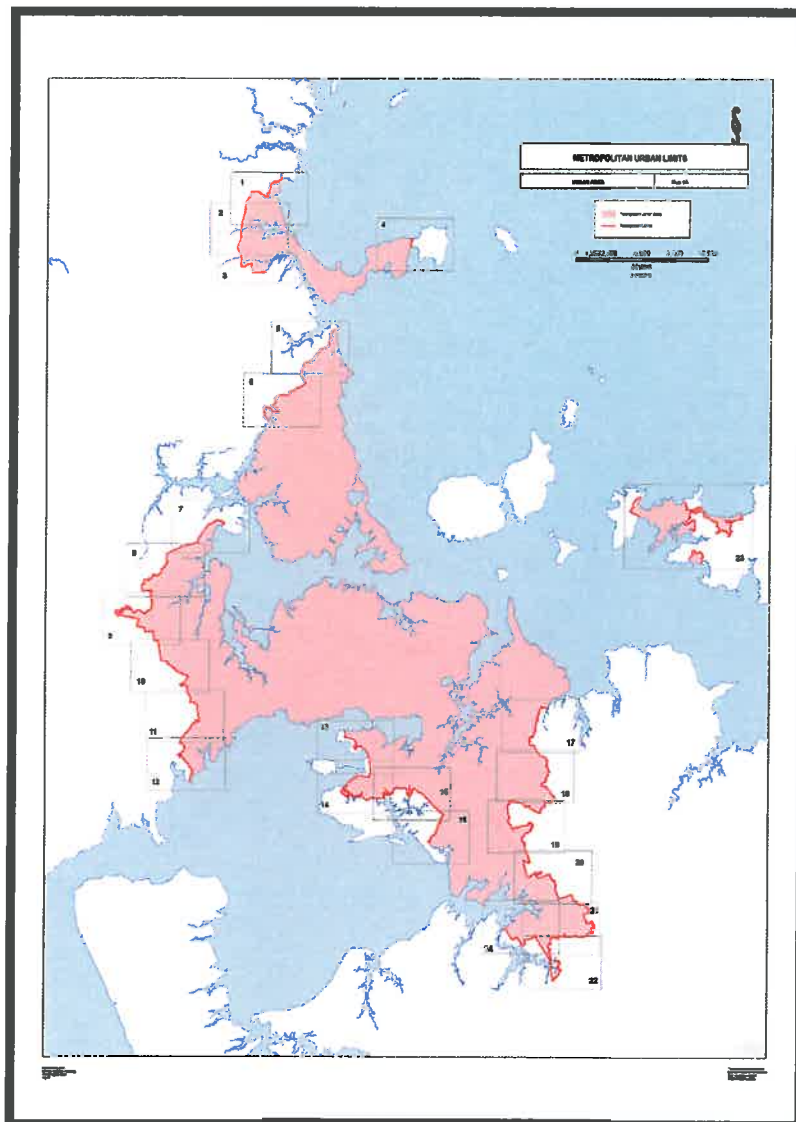
Urban Development is defined as:

development which is not of a rural nature. Urban development is differentiated from rural development by its scale, density, visual character, and the dominance of built structures. Urban development may also be characterised by a reliance on reticulated services (such as water supply and drainage) by its generation of traffic and includes activities (such as manufacturing), which are usually provided for in urban areas.

Rural lands/ Area is defined as:

those areas of Region, including parts of the Hauraki Gulf islands, which lie outside the defined urban areas, that is, outside the metropolitan urban limits and the rural town and coastal settlements' urban limits.

The ARPS states that urban development should be contained within the metropolitan urban limits (MUL). The extent of the MUL is shown on the map below:



Map showing Metropolitan Urban Limits



The Final Draft of the Auckland Regional Policy Statement review, dated August 2010 provides a current review of the operative Auckland Regional Policy Statement (ARPS), which became operative on 31st August 1999. The Final Draft of the 2010 review document was just prior to the amalgamation of the regional council and seven territorial authorities into the Auckland Council which came into effect on 1st November 2010. It states within this document that:

*“It is intended that this draft ARPS will inform the incoming Auckland Council and provide a sound base for the resource management component of the new planning framework”.*¹²

*A primary focus of the review in relation to rural areas was on improving and clarifying the intent of the policies that were introduced in Proposed Change 6 in relation to countryside living, new rural and coastal settlements and existing rural and coastal settlements. The overall objective for the rural environment is to ensure that the rural area remains available for primary production purposes and is managed in a way that promotes compact urban form. This is achieved by a policy framework that prevents further fragmentation of land and limits or restricts the establishment of urban activities. The policies are intended to enable countryside living, but acknowledge that there is sufficient capacity to meet demand and there is a need to be more directive as to where and how development should proceed”.*¹³

The Final Draft document provides an overview of the resource management issues relevant to the Auckland Region together with suggested policies and methods to address the issues to ensure that the resources of the region are managed in a sustainable and integrated manner¹⁴.

The following statements from the Draft ARPS are of particular importance to the provision of countryside living development:

- The Auckland region is one of the fastest growing regions in Australasia.
- Since 2001 the regional growth rate has been higher than other regions, accounting for almost half the national population growth between 2001 – 2006.
- This rapid growth is likely to continue, with the regional population possibly reaching two million by 2036 representing an increase of almost 700,000 people (53% per cent) from the current number.
- Between 2001 and 2006 an estimated 66 per cent of the region’s growth came from immigration.
- In terms of internal migration more people moved out of the Auckland region to live in other regions than the other way around.¹⁵

Chapter two of the draft ARPS states the ‘*Issues of Regional Significance*’; with the two most relevant issues being Issue 2.1: Providing for Growth and Issue 2.5: Sustainably Managing our Rural Environment.

The following points noted within Issue 2.1: Providing for Growth are of relevance:

¹² Page 6 of the Draft Proposed ARPS Final Version: 2010 08 31

¹³ Page 17 – ARPS Handover Report October 2010

¹⁴ Introduction, Page 7, Draft Proposed ARPS Final Version: 2010 08 31

¹⁵ Above bullet points taken from Draft ARPS 2010, page 12.



- *Further growth could occur in the broad corridors of Dairy Flat, Papakura South, and along the corridor from Massey North to Helensville. However, urban development in these areas will impact on rural productivity, rural character, and amenity and impose high costs on existing and future residents for the provision of additional infrastructure and services.¹⁶*
- *The expansion of the urban area onto rural land, and the location of urban activities on rural land, may diminish the visual distinction between rural and urban areas and between types of activities. The intrusion of urban structures and activities may adversely impact on both landscape character and amenity.¹⁷*

Issue 2.5: Sustainably Managing our Rural Environment states that:

“The subdivision, use and development of rural land is greatly influenced by its proximity to, and economic, social and cultural links with New Zealand’s largest metropolitan area. The interrelationship between urban and rural Auckland needs to be recognised and managed, to provide for existing and future generations...”

The explanation to this Issue states that:

“Ninety per cent of the land area within the Auckland region lies outside of the urban areas... There is a need to ensure that rural Auckland retains sufficient flexibility in terms of locational choice, landholding patterns, transport accessibility, and rural amenity to enable these different uses to continue”.

There is a discussion relating to Countryside living provided under the Issue. The discussion states:

Rural Auckland has a large number (over 11,300 in 2006) of small titles (eight hectares or less). Under district plan rules, as at 2006, there is potential to create approximately 20,000 further titles. Countryside living dwellings, as of 2006, were being built at the rate of 650 new dwellings a year. At this rate, it will take at least 20 years to exhaust the existing provision for countryside living. Despite the adequate capacity, there is a continuing expectation in parts of the regional community that further land subdivision into smaller lots should continue. This has the potential to foreclose future options for primary production purposes and impact on rural character and amenity. Managing the existing pool of subdivided lots and the form, scale, and location of further rural subdivision is a key factor influencing the sustainable management of our rural environment.

*While countryside living can provide social, economic and cultural benefits to both individuals and local rural communities, its scale and location has the potential to undermine a compact and contained urban metropolitan form and affect the boundaries of existing coastal and rural towns. The dispersed settlement patterns associated with countryside living lead to large distances between home and employment and other services, and a high level of reliance on private cars. This results in inefficient provision and use of physical and social infrastructure, and increased pressure for urban services in rural areas that can lead to unplanned urban development”.*¹⁸

¹⁶ Page 17 of the Draft Proposed ARPS Final Version: 2010 08 31

¹⁷ Page 20 of the Draft Proposed ARPS Final Version: 2010 08 31

¹⁸ Draft ARPS, page 32.



Chapter 3 of the draft ARPS sets out the Resource Management Direction for Auckland. The following component of the resource management direction is relevant to rural areas:

Rural areas retain their character, amenity and productive potential. This is achieved by:

- *Ensuring that the productive potential of rural land is maintained and protected:*
- *...*
- *Ensuring a compact and contained urban form that does not extend into rural areas*
- *Focussing any necessary growth requirements into existing urban areas including the rural and coastal settlements;*
- *Limiting further subdivision for countryside living;*
- *Limiting further rural subdivision to protect rural character; particularly in those rural and coastal environment areas that have high natural character, landscape and amenity values.*¹⁹

Chapter 7 addresses the 'Rural Environment'. The focus of the rural chapter can be summarised by the blurb contained in the green shaded area on pages 86 and 87. The excerpt is included below:

"The objectives and policies in this chapter establish a framework for the management of the rural environment in the Auckland region that:

***directs** activities in the rural environment to be rural related, and prevents urban activities from locating outside the MUL and outside the limits of rural and coastal settlements;*

***prevents** further subdivision of rural land into small lots (eight hectares and under);*

***relocates** existing undeveloped small lots to areas that are more supportive of a countryside living lifestyle;*

***results** in rural areas with the following characteristics:*

- *rural land remains available for primary production, particularly rural related activities that support the national, regional and local economy;*
- *the landscape and character of productive rural areas remain typical of a working rural environment;*
- *ecosystem/biodiversity corridors are supported;*
- *countryside living is located in areas in close proximity to urban areas and not on productive land".*

The Overview to Chapter 7: Rural Environment notes that *"The role that rural and coastal settlements play in accommodating the region's growth is set out in chapter 5 of the draft ARPS... This chapter on the rural environment focuses on defining what constitutes appropriate activity in the rural environment. The approach recognises that a rural lifestyle is attractive to many Aucklanders, so is intended to enable countryside living, while balancing this against protection of productive capacity and rural amenity".*

It also notes that:

¹⁹ Draft ARPS, page 41.



*“Historically the ARC has identified the loss of productive soils in the region as a regionally significant issue. While protection of the rural land resource still drives resource management direction, there is an increasing focus on the retention of rural character and amenity, and on the role that the rural area plays in the region’s economy”.*²⁰

The following objectives and policies are directly relevant to countryside living development. There are also objectives and policies in other chapters of the draft ARPS that are also relevant but to a large extent the issues are interrelated with those resource management issues addressed in the relevant objective and policies detailed below.

Objectives:

- 7.2.1 *To protect the natural and physical resources of rural areas (outside the limits of the urban area, and the rural and coastal settlements) from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development”.*
- 7.2.3 *To maintain the rural character of the region and protect the identified areas of high natural character, outstanding natural landscapes, and heritage values in the rural environment.*
- 7.2.4 *To protect the productive capacity of the soils in the region by ensuring that there is no subdivision, use or development that will significantly affect their ongoing versatility and accessibility.*
- 7.2.5 *To prevent further fragmentation of rural landholdings.*

Policies:

7.3.2 *Managing activities in rural areas*

The rural environment shall be managed so that:

- a. *the different land use types and their associated rural character are identified and managed accordingly;*
- b. *the life-supporting capacity of the soil is safeguarded;*
- c. *potential reverse sensitivity issues are minimised;*
- d. *there is no increase in urban activities in areas zoned as rural;*
- e. *sustainable land use and management practises are promoted;*
- f. *...*
- g. *the rural character is maintained (see policy 7.3.3);*
- h. *...*
- i. *...*
- j. *the features and characteristics of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area, which contribute to the natural and cultural heritage, recreational, landscape and amenity values of the rural environment, are protected and enhanced;*
- k. *the features and characteristics of the rural areas within the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park area, which contribute to the natural and cultural heritage, recreational, landscape, and amenity values of the rural environment, are protected and enhanced.*

²⁰ Page 86 of the Draft Proposed ARPS Final Version: 2010 08 31



7.3.3 Maintaining rural character

To maintain the rural character of an area when managing subdivision, use and development the following matters shall be considered:...

7.4.1 Managing rural subdivision

Land in the rural area outside the countryside living zones shall be managed to ensure that there is no further increase in the number of small lots (less than and equal to eight hectares), subject to policies 7.4.2 and 7.4.3.

7.4.2 Countryside living lots

The provision of lots for countryside living purposes within the rural area shall be managed by:

- a. allowing for the relocation of existing and / or consented countryside living lots within the rural area to countryside living zones, where that relocation will better achieve the outcomes sought through policies 7.4.4 and 7.4.5.
- b. restricting the number of additional lots for countryside living purposes to the subdivision opportunities available under the applicable district plan(s) unless it can be shown that:
 - i. there is insufficient provision for countryside living within the relevant geographic sector, having regard to the Capacity for Growth Study 2006 (ARC March 2010);
 - ii. the outcomes sought through policies 7.4.4 and 7.4.5.

7.4.3 Environmental protection lots

Subdivision of rural land for the purpose of protecting an environmental value may occur only where:

- (a) this will protect the significant natural values identified on the land in question;
- (b) the title created is transferred to either a countryside living zone (and subject to the constraints on location in policy 7.4.4 or a rural and coastal settlement identified in schedule 1c.

7.4.4 Managing the location of countryside living zones...

7.4.5 Managing the design of countryside living...

2.3 LOCAL BOARD PLANS

A review of the relevant Local Board Plans has been undertaken. Generally the plans do not provide detailed comment or policy direction in relation to rural land management. However the Rodney local board plan states a priority as being to “actively manage growth and retain coastal and rural character”. A similar statement is reflected in the Waiheke plan which states that “maintaining the character of the Islands...” is recognised as important.

The Upper Harbour local board plan reflects the importance of containing urban sprawl and states:

“We think that the metropolitan urban limit (MUL) running through Upper Harbour should be maintained where it is to protect our valued rural areas and green spaces... Growth must not come at the expense of our green spaces and rural areas...”



The Franklin local board plan seeks a healthy, thriving economy so people can live and work locally. The plan states an important goal as being to build the rural economy and discusses the challenges associated with achieving a balance between keeping land areas available for a working rural economy and providing for growth.

2.4 DISTRICT WIDE GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

2.4.1 Rodney District Rural Strategy – September 2010

The Rodney District Rural Strategy was adopted in September 2010. This strategy is a long term (25 year) outcome focussed strategy, the purpose of which is to:

- *foster a sustainable rural economy;*
- *protect and enhance rural landscapes and rural character;*
- *improve rural development outcomes for communities and the environment;*
- *protect the future benefits of un-built areas and open space;*
- *manage settlement edges and green belts in the District*

With respect to Countryside Living Development, the strategy states:

The outcomes of the Countryside Living Town and Rural zones in the current District Plan and the package of rules and policies used to manage them seem to be very similar apart from areas where the predominant site sizes are close to 1 ha compared with areas where the predominant site sizes are well over 2 ha. These differences may not justify a separate zone however different minimum site sizes are considered necessary to differentiate the character of more rural places like Taupaki from Rural Lifestyle Environments on the urban edge of Matakana.

The strategy signals a set of possible changes to the District Plan involving a number of rural environments and accompanying overlays. A “Rural Lifestyle Environment” is proposed by the strategy. The “Rural Lifestyle Environment” is described as “defined areas close to metropolitan Auckland and urban centres with fragmented subdivision patterns that are used primarily for country living with some productive sites and hobby scale farming”. The recommended “Rural Lifestyle Environment” areas are Wellsford, Matakana, Warkworth, Algies Bay, Kaukapakapa, Helensville, Kumeu/Huapai, Puhoi; Stillwater-Dairy Flat-Redvale – Coatesville; Riverhead; Parakai – Helensville; Waimauku (Hinaiu Rd/School Rd and Taylor Rd); south of Riverhead – east of Taupaki.²¹ See maps included as **Attachment 2**.

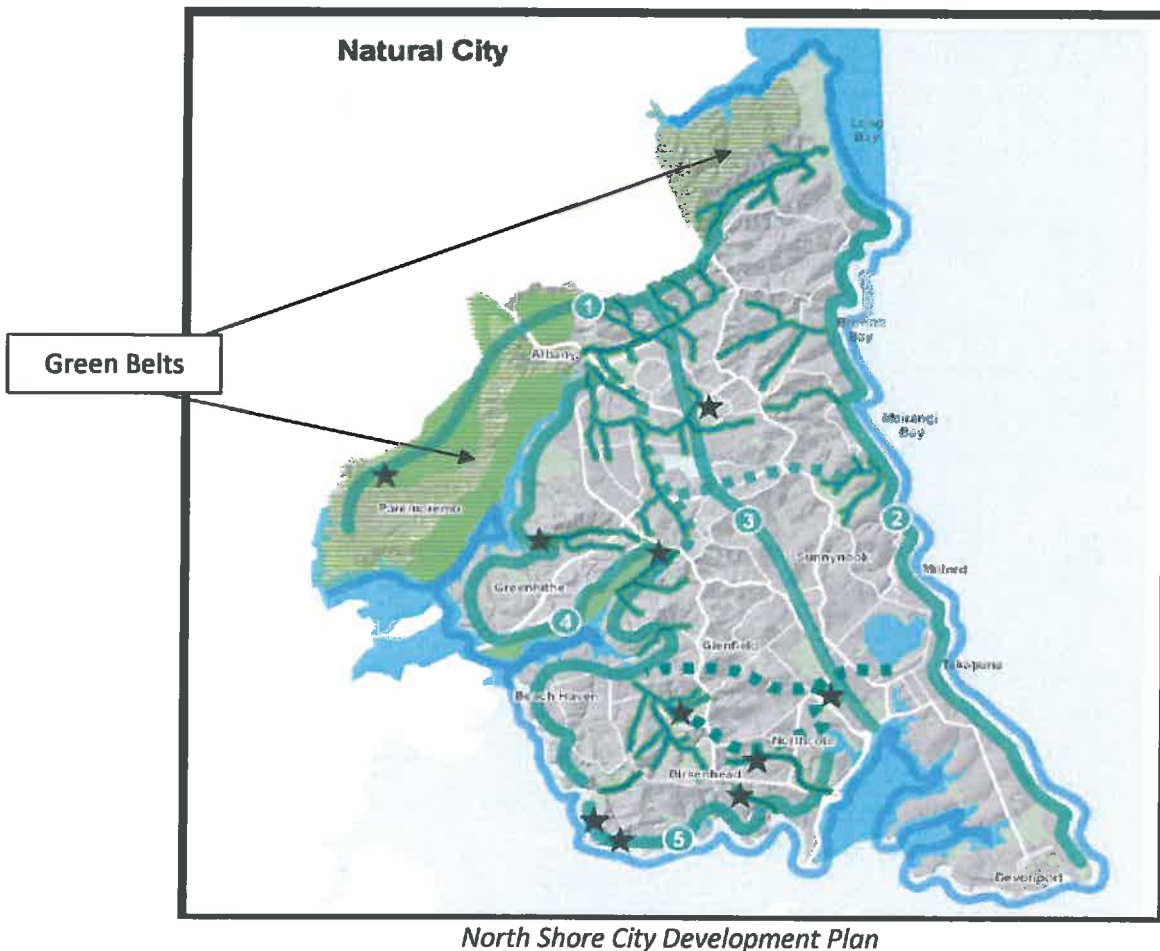
2.4.2 North Shore City Council City Plan 2009 – 2024 (NSCCCP)

Module 2 of the North Shore City Council City Plan 2009 – 2024 talks about the direction of the city. The map²² below, which is also included within **Attachment 3**, shows the layout of the city, noting the greenbelt/countryside area showing in the north of the city:

²¹ See page 30 of the Rodney Rural Strategy

²² Refer to page 27 of the North Shore City Council City Plan 2009-2024





Rather than identifying additional areas of countryside living opportunities this plan discusses the need to “protect the open rural nature of the open countryside ‘greenbelt’ area in the north of the city”.

2.4.3 Best for the West: Growth Management Strategy for Waitakere – April 2010

The Growth Management Strategy for Waitakere sets out a vision, goals, pathways and targets to deliver on this spatial plan.

With regard to rural areas it notes:

*“while the rural area makes up a significant part of the City in terms of land area (approximately 78 percent) it is envisaged that only a small proportion of growth (approximately five percent) will take place in the rural parts of the City”.*²³

The strategy notes that the limited population growth that does occur in the rural areas prior to 2021 will be provided for on existing vacant sites, or in accordance with existing structure plans (Oratia, Swanson, Birdwood, Dilworth) as well as through subdivision and development controls which are currently provided for in the District Plan.

A copy of the growth schedule²⁴ for Waitakere City is included within Attachment 5.

²³ Refer to page 51 of the Growth Management Strategy for Waitakere: April 2010

²⁴ Refer to page 46 of the Growth Management Strategy for Waitakere: April 2010



2.4.4 Essentially Waiheke: A Village and Rural Communities Strategy – Adopted October 2000

The main purpose of this strategy was to establish a framework for the future development of Waiheke. The strategy is based on the premise that sufficient capacity exists within the existing village structure and in the existing rural areas to accommodate expected growth over the next 10 years. This capacity exists primarily in the form of vacant and underdeveloped residential sites.²⁵

2.4.5 Manukau Rural Strategy

The Manukau Rural Strategy introduces a “growth concept” for managing growth in the rural areas of Manukau. The growth concept considers where, when and how growth may be managed over the next 20 years.

The rural area of Manukau contains 36,000 hectares of land, which comprises two-thirds of total land area of Manukau City (54,000 hectares).

This strategy discusses countryside living development and states:

The research indicates that demand for countryside living or lifestyle development opportunities within the rural areas will continue into the future. For the purposes of this Strategy, the term Countryside Living includes clustered rural hamlets albeit recognising that they are two different forms of development in the rural area. Rural clustered hamlets can accommodate an equivalent number of household units as dispersed countryside living but retains a large area of land for productive use.

This increased demand combined with limited supply will eventually place pressure on Council to enable further countryside living areas to be established in the rural area. As a result, the Rural Strategy recognises the need to plan for the provision of countryside living development within the rural area of Manukau. Instead of allowing for this form of development to occur sporadically across the rural area, the Rural Strategy focuses on providing countryside living development within identified and specifically designed countryside living zones.

This is consistent with the approach adopted by Plan Change No.8 Whitford Rural and in the existing rural zones in the Manukau Operative District Plan. The main reasoning behind this approach is that countryside living development can be more effectively and efficiently addressed at a catchment or stream catchment level where investigations into stormwater, wastewater, geotechnical, landscape, visual, heritage and ecological effects can be more comprehensively considered. In addition, countryside living development may require some upgrading of infrastructure and the provision of services. When undertaking growth studies and associated structure plans/plan changes, Council is also able to ascertain the cumulative effects of countryside living on the environment and determine whether that particular area can sustain additional growth. If applied to a catchment or stream catchment these infrastructural resources can be co-ordinated into specific areas rather than widespread across the general rural area. Conflicts between existing farming activities and new lifestyle dwellers in an area can occur if countryside living development is not carefully managed and planned for. In order to minimise the potential for these types of conflicts to occur it is recommended that specific countryside living zones with appropriate rules and provisions be established to cater for this type of activity.²⁶

²⁵ Refer to page 18 of Essentially Waiheke: A Village and Rural Communities Strategy – Adopted October 2000

²⁶ Refer to page 36 of the Manukau Rural Strategy – Interim Decision



2.4.6 Franklin District Growth Strategy 2051

The Franklin District Growth Strategy 2051 lays out a blueprint for the next 50 years which identifies, amongst other things, where growth (residential, rural, commercial, industrial and recreational) can be accommodated.

It states that future growth will be accommodated through infill and redevelopment in existing urban areas, greenfield development and rural living, with some of that occurring in close proximity to villages. A higher share of the District's future population will be accommodated in the Northern sector, making use of significant areas of available zoned land and existing infrastructure, while at the same time reducing pressures on the coast. Future growth in the Northern sector also provides the opportunity to achieve a high level of integration between employment, transport infrastructure and population growth at the district-wide and local levels including support for public transport through increased densities in the towns.

With regard to the management of countryside living development the strategy states:

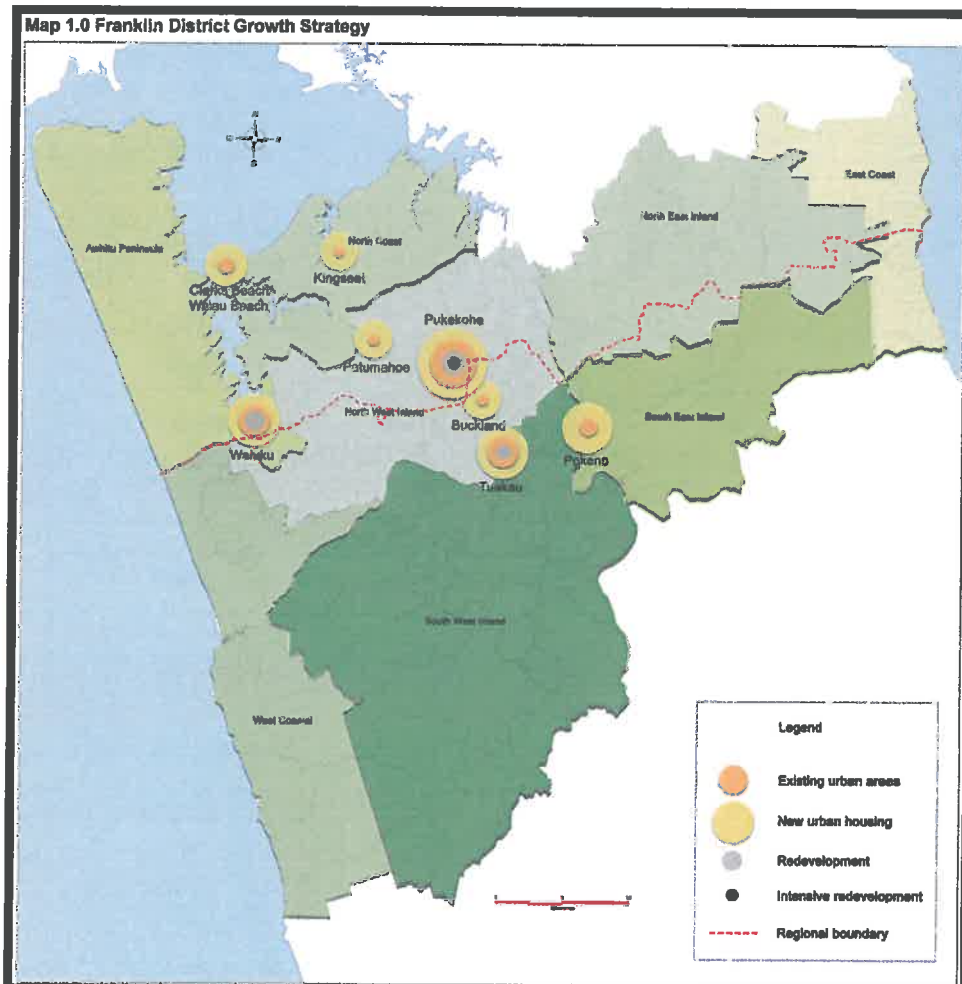
There are multiple ways in which this growth can be accommodated in the rural areas, but the most important issue is accommodating it in a manner that minimises the adverse effects and retains the rural character.

As discussed earlier in Section 2, the demand for rural lifestyle options is considerable and is not abating - both within the Franklin district and the wider Auckland region. If not managed, rural lifestyle not only has the potential to inefficiently use farmland, but it also can undermine the rural character that attracts rural lifestyle in the first place. Poorly sited countryside living also fragments farmland and increases the cost of farmland. This makes it increasingly difficult for productive farms to expand and increases the potential for reverse sensitivity issues to arise. The key is locating it in appropriate locations that minimize these impacts.

The position of this Growth Strategy is that rural countryside living will be managed rather than let it occur on an ad hoc basis and not always in the best location. Paerata and Ararimu have been identified as two areas appropriate for focusing rural growth due to a number of factors including availability of public transport, proximity to towns and rural settlements, transport networks, slope, streams, avoidance of outstanding natural landscapes, existing fragmented land holding patterns, geological and environmental factors. It is considered that accommodating growth in identified, contained areas will contain and lessen the adverse effects of rural lifestyle in other more sensitive parts of the District. Strong policies will need to be introduced to direct development to these areas.

The Franklin District Growth study map is shown below, a copy is also provided within **Attachment 6**:





Franklin District Growth Strategy

2.5 DISTRICT PLANS

As noted in the previous section of this report, countryside living development is provided for in various forms throughout the region. The map contained within **Attachment 7** shows the extent of countryside living development provided for across the region:

Each of the former district plans within the Auckland Region discusses the issues associated with countryside living development as set out below:

2.5.1 Rodney

Chapter 7 - Rural of the Rodney District Plan states that:

One of the key management pressures for the District relates to its proximity to metropolitan Auckland. The southern and south western rural parts of Rodney District abut North Shore City and Waitakere City. The urban growth pressures from these urban-based Councils spills into rural Rodney.

Significant parts of the District around the metropolitan fringe of Auckland have been experiencing lifestyle development to the extent that lifestyle activities are now the dominant land use for a large portion of the District. The metropolitan fringe area places

considerable pressure from urban sprawl and conflicts between lifestyle and rural activities as well as urban related activities seeking to establish in the fringe areas.

The issues faced by the Rodney District with respect to rural areas are set out in section 7.2 of the plan. With regard to the urban rural fringe around Auckland the plan states:

Properties in this area are generally less than 10 hectares with many 4 hectares or less. Houses and buildings tend to be larger, more modern and have more significant capital investment and are closer together. People tend to work within Auckland and commute each day by car. Any use of the land tends to be less intensive and less productive, although there are many examples of both intensive and productive usage from small land holdings. Larger pastoral farms have become the exception rather than the rule. Full-time farmers are almost non-existent. The intensity of residential development, although sparse compared to urban areas, has increased. Although open space is a key element, it has become fragmented through fencing, planting, landscaping and the siting of buildings. There are far greater volumes of traffic generally in these areas, particularly on the main roads.²⁷

Other issues with rural residential development in rural areas noted in the plan are as follows:

Intensification of development in particular, can adversely affect rural amenity values, where mitigation measures do not accompany such development. As subdivision is most often the precursor to more intensive development, it is the first stage in a process that can result in adverse effects on many of the amenity values people live in rural areas to enjoy.²⁸

Rural subdivision and development may adversely affect ecological values including intrinsic values of Okura estuary and the existing areas of native terrestrial vegetation and habitats. There is, however, opportunity through further subdivision and development to protect areas of native vegetation and wetland areas and for the maintenance and enhancement of ecological corridors.²⁹

The continuing subdivision of land into smaller lots reduces the potential of the land to be used for a range of more traditional types of farming activities such as beef and dairy farming. Fragmentation, therefore, reduces the ability of the land to be used for activities requiring larger land areas should market or cultural conditions dictate such an approach. Retention of land of differing soil types in a range of site sizes is necessary to maintain the versatility of rural land in order to respond to changing needs and aspirations of the present and future populations.³⁰

The use and development of rural land for productive and other purposes, such as rural residential lifestyle, has the potential to cause soil erosion at a much faster rate than would occur naturally³¹

Rural subdivision and land use activities can adversely affect water quality in a number of ways³²

²⁷ Refer to page 4 of Chapter 7 of the Rodney District Plan

²⁸ Refer to page 6 of Chapter 7 of the Rodney District Plan

²⁹ Refer to page 9 of Chapter 7 of the Rodney District Plan

³⁰ Refer to page 10 of Chapter 7 of the Rodney District Plan

³¹ Refer to page 10 of Chapter 7 of the Rodney District Plan



Land development of all kinds can destroy or modify waahi tapu sites, and the greater the density of sites, the greater the chances are of this occurring.³³

In order to avoid the adverse effects of ad hoc rural residential development the plan provisions provide for the transferring of titles from zones such as General Rural, East Coast Rural and the Landscape Protection Rural Zone to areas zoned as Countryside Living Town.

2.5.2 North Shore

North Shore City is also a city that is experiencing rapid growth. There is concern that population growth is placing undesirable pressure on the city and the region's environment and resources, which is eroding the natural values which attract people to it. One of these concerns is the un-contained urban sprawl of the City onto the countryside along the northern boundary of the city.

The rural area within North Shore City comprises some 1090 hectares with three distinct characteristics:

- Bush-clad escarpments of Greenhithe, Paremoremo, and the Albany Hills
- Partially bush-clad slopes of Schnapper Rock Road and Ridge Road
- Productive farmland in the Paremoremo valley

The major resource management issues concerning the rural areas within North Shore are as follows:

- *How to ensure that the landscapes of the rural area, particularly those of high natural value, are protected while still allowing rural activities to occur*
- *How to best protect areas of bush, trees and other habitats, and their ecological values*
- *How to manage the effects of development activities to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the environment*
- *How to ensure that productive land is retained for agricultural use and managed effectively*
- *How to encourage good land management practices through different lifestyle opportunities*
- *How to ensure that the rural area maintains its natural character and amenity and does not become a 'de facto' residential zone.³⁴*

2.5.3 Waitakere

One of the key growth issues identified for Waitakere City is increasing pressure to accommodate a higher intensity of development in the rural part of the city, including the internationally significant Waitakere Ranges and Foothills area.³⁵ It states that:

The bulk of the City is covered by landscape and parklands that have high value. The Waitakere Ranges and Foothills Protection Project (2003-2005) has identified that the Waitakere Ranges area is under unique pressure for subdivision, use and development due to its close proximity to Auckland, New Zealand's largest metropolitan area.

Subdivision and resultant development is increasing the numbers of built structures in the landscape and altering the character of the area, with associated earthworks and vegetation clearance leading to irreversible loss of environmental and landscape values.

³² Refer to page 11 of Chapter 7 of the Rodney District Plan

³³ Refer to page 13 of Chapter 7 of the Rodney District Plan

³⁴ Refer to page 1 of Section 18 of the North Shore City District Plan

³⁵ Refer to section 5.0 (page 5) of the District Plan Policy Section of the Waitakere City District Plan



*The pressure for subdivision and development is likely to increase relative to the City and Region's rapidly growing population. The foothills and coastal villages are currently absorbing most of this pressure, with adverse effects becoming increasingly apparent.*³⁶

Waitakere Council has a strategic policy of directing growth into its three primary town centres – New Lynn, Henderson and Westgate/Massey North. The plan goes on to state:

*... development outside the metropolitan urban limits needs to be very carefully managed, not only to ensure the achievement of urban consolidation strategies, but also to provide the qualities of rural areas, such as natural features (including vegetation, streams and soils), landscapes, rural character and the efficient provisions of infrastructure. While some growth will occur in rural areas, this will be more to provide for rurally based activities and, to a limited extent, appropriate living choices, rather than to accommodate the bulk of the City's growth.*³⁷

2.5.4 Hauraki Gulf Islands

The Hauraki Gulf Islands section of the Auckland City Council District Plan does not appear to contain specific issues relating to the provisions of countryside living development. It does however state:

*The physical and natural environment in the islands creates major constraints on subdivision. In particular, there is a need to preserve the natural environment, visual character, amenity, and heritage values and to have regard to drainage capability.*³⁸

2.5.5 Manukau

Because of its proximity to the metropolitan area, the rural part of Manukau City is used for a wide range of activities. The plan notes that countryside side living is one of these activities and goes on to state:

*Countryside living which includes scattered rural residential development, farmlets, hobby farms, residential bush lots and unserviced large-lot residential development is a significant activity in the rural area of Manukau City. A large proportion of properties (nearly 90%) in the rural area are under 20 hectares in area. A large proportion of the residents of the rural area have occupations other than farming which in turn reinforces the notion of countryside living.*³⁹

In addition to the effects that countryside living development can have on character and amenity values, the plan also notes the effects associated with countryside living on soils and land productivity and states:

One of the more difficult activities to consider in relation to this issue is countryside living and whether the associated subdivision and coverage jeopardises the productive potential of rural land. There is debate as to whether small properties can be operated to enable efficient use of the soil resource or whether land fragmentation and the capitalization that goes with countryside living make this unlikely.

The strong desire in the community to create opportunities for countryside living results in the fragmentation of the land, thus reducing access to the soil resource for activities

³⁶ Refer to section 5.0 (page 5) of the District Plan Policy Section of the Waitakere City District Plan

³⁷ Refer to section 5.0 (page 7) of the District Plan Policy Section of the Waitakere City District Plan

³⁸ Refer to page 3 of part 12 of the Auckland City District Plan – Hauraki Gulf Islands Section – Proposed 2006

³⁹ Refer to page 3 of Chapter 12 of the Manukau City District Plan



requiring large lots. Conversely, if all land was held in large lots the potential for land to be used would also be restricted because some activities require small lots. It is therefore important to ensure that a mix of lot sizes is available so that the productive potential of the land and soil resources can be realised.

Areas chosen for countryside living development in Manukau were chosen because:

- *they do not generally have high quality soils. However, in the case of the Rural 2 zone, the soils are of sufficient quality to support part-time farming. Therefore the productive potential of the soil and land resource in the wider rural area is not compromised by buildings or fragmentation.*
- *concentrating countryside living into particular areas helps protect the rural character, landscape qualities and amenity values of the wider rural area by keeping the density of residential development relatively low in most of the rural area.*
- *concentrating countryside living also helps to avoid creating conflict situations from the effects of primary production activities on “countryside” residents such as noise, odour and spray drift.*
- *they are all relatively close to the metropolitan area. Therefore, the distance travelled by commuters to jobs and facilities in the urban area will be minimised.*

The Manukau Proposed Second Reviewed District Scheme 1989 first introduced a countryside living zone, the Rural 2 zone, into the Whitford Catchment. Continued demand for countryside living subsequently led to the introduction of further zones within Whitford in the form of the Rural 3 and Rural 4 zones in the Manukau Proposed District Plan 1995. The opportunity for creating rural-residential lots within these zones has been readily taken up by many landowners and there is limited opportunity for any further countryside living development under these zones as they apply to the Whitford Catchment.

The opportunity has been extended to allow for countryside living development within the Whitford Rural Area. Countryside living development is to be intermixed with more traditional rural land use activities such as agriculture and horticulture in order to retain the rural outlook and associated rural amenity values of the area. The establishment of countryside living therefore utilises the existing features of the Whitford Rural Area in terms of its proximity to important services and employment opportunities afforded in the nearby urban area and its coastal and rural outlook.

The provision of countryside living within the Whitford Rural Area is desirable in that it will act as a gradual buffer between the urban edge defined by the Metropolitan Urban Limits (Auckland Regional Policy Statement 1999) and the more traditional rural areas contained within the Rural 1 zone.

The issues associated with countryside living development in the Whitford Rural area are described as follows:

The amount, location and design of countryside living development can have a direct impact on the maintenance of landscape character and rural amenity values within the Whitford Rural Area. It can also have a direct impact on the natural character and quality of the coastal environment. A high level of countryside living development within the Whitford Rural Area will generate more noticeable changes to the rural environment in terms of noise, traffic volumes, and number of buildings and structures than a more conservative provision. The location of the development in terms of whether it is highly visible or discretely positioned can impact on the rural and coastal outlook of the area. The design of housing and associated structures and landscaping plays an important role



in how the development is perceived in terms of "blending in" with its surroundings. If landscape character, rural amenity and natural character is not appropriately addressed as part of countryside living development, it can result in a corresponding loss of the very rural amenity values that attracted residents to this rural and coastal area in the first instance⁴⁰

The following additional issues are raised with respect to the provision of countryside living development in the Whitford Rural area:

- effects on natural resources and ecological systems including loss of terrestrial and aquatic habitat, changes in the amount and quality of stormwater runoff entering waterways, slope instability and erosion as well as wastewater treatment, soil saturation and water contamination;
- conflicts/reverse sensitivity;
- effects on soil resource;
- effects on provision of open space
- effects associated with inadequate or uncoordinated physical infrastructure
- effects on special relationship Maori have with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga.⁴¹

2.5.6 Papakura

Papakura's location at the boundary of metropolitan Auckland means that there are growth pressures around the urban/rural interface as well as pressures for rural-residential 'countryside living' development.

The Countryside Living Zone in Papakura is applied to two areas of the District which have largely already been subdivided and developed for lifestyle living. The issues associated with the Countryside Living Zone provided for by proposed Plan Change 13 are as follows:

1. *How to ensure that activities within the Countryside Living Zone are undertaken in a way which avoids, remedies, or mitigates adverse effects on the amenity values of the zone.*
2. *How to ensure that activities within the Countryside Living Zone are undertaken in a way which avoids adverse effects on the ecological and landscape features of the zone.*
3. *Subdivision in the Countryside Living Zone provides opportunities to encourage the restoration of ecological habitats within the Hunua Ecological District.*
4. *Parts of the Countryside Living Zone are in relatively close proximity to the two largest existing quarries of the District and the designated Ardmore Military Training Area.⁴²*

2.5.7 Franklin

The former Franklin District was a rural district.

Within the wider rural and coastal areas a large number of lots were created across the District between the 1970s to 1990s under the auspices of horticultural lots and other purposes. This resulted in a wide distribution of new lots across the District. A significant number of these lots

⁴⁰ Refer to pages 4 and 5 of Chapter 12A of the Manukau City District Plan

⁴¹ Refer to pages 5 – 9 of Chapter 12A of the Manukau City District Plan

⁴² Refer to pages 59 and 60 of Papakura District Plan – Proposed Plan Change No. 13, Section Two, Part 2 – Objectives, Policies and Rules – Rural Zone



remain vacant. The latent potential within the rural and coastal areas is the number of existing lots that have the potential to be built upon.

One of the main questions within Rural Plan Change 14 is how to manage future growth given the existing vacant lots and the lack of current options, to provide a range of choice for accommodating growth, other than the take up of existing vacant lots.

The issues associated with living opportunities within rural areas are discussed within Rural Plan Change 14 where it is stated:

This demand for countryside living creates a unique tension between those relying on the productive capability of the land and those who, for a variety of reasons, elect to reside in the rural areas. Often the rural amenity and environment that is attributable to primary production, is also valued by those who wish to live outside an urban environment. The demand for such rural living can in turn undermine the viability of primary production activities and erode the amenity and environmental qualities that make the rural area an attractive place in which to live.

The central issue is how to provide for rural living opportunities in areas that consolidate and support existing communities and settlements, retain rural and coastal character, and promote environmental restoration and enhancement, while avoiding a wide and ad-hoc dispersal of countryside living across the District, and further fragmentation of productive lands.

Historically the Franklin District has provided rural-residential zones adjacent to the larger urban centres of Pukekohe, Waiuku and Tuakau to cater for and direct some of these lifestyle pressures with lot sizes not generally exceeding 1 hectare or Horticultural Lot subdivision of the 10acre (4 hectare) lot size range created under the auspices for horticulture. A substantial number of lots were created between the 1970s and 1990s. This has provided the main source of lots for countryside living within the District, in particular in the northern part where demand is high. These lots are dispersed across the area, although there are examples where up to 20The demand for countryside living has historically been catered for through the provision of rural residential zones or indirectly through the ad hoc development of lots designed for more intensive agricultural or horticultural uses. Limited options have also been available through retirement and general purpose lots available on larger properties, and conservation lots where environmental enhancement has occurred. lots are grouped into urban style large lot subdivision on existing farm properties with a considerable change in, or little regard to, the character of the location.

The uptake of land has often occurred quite rapidly compared to other forms of development, and lots have often been created that are not the optimum size or layout for those seeking to reside there. Residents complain to Council that 2 to 4 hectares is too small to farm, yet too large to garden. There are examples around the region where these parcels are simply left in pasture and mown. The demand remains however, because this is often the only form of countryside living readily available throughout the region. There is a shortfall of growth opportunities within the District's northern villages and no dedicated area of countryside living opportunities within the areas of high demand.



Further issues can arise when rural residential areas are intensively developed. For example a multitude of on-site wastewater treatment facilities in relatively close proximity can have cumulative effects leading to saturation of soils and groundwater contamination. These issues are often associated with concentrated runoff from stormwater and un-serviced wastewater systems.

The creation of more intensive rural countryside living scattered across the rural area becomes a rural version of the suburban sprawl that the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy is trying to remedy. Scattered development can also create conflict with other rural activities that require rural locations and therefore adversely affects rural amenity. In addition, the creation of countryside living scattered across the whole District, not directly related to any existing services and facilities or within a reasonable proximity to existing towns and villages, raises issues for Council about how to effectively and efficiently provide the services that residents eventually expect. Isolated countryside living, distant from existing main highway networks, can create high levels of transport movements across the District.

It is recognised that there is certainly a demand for countryside living properties, and when there is no supply, the land values escalate. Land values can increase to the point where it becomes more economical to subdivide land to use for country lifestyle residential, rather than to use it for primary production. This has been demonstrated to be the case in many areas around New Zealand. This result would severely affect the community's primary focus to preserve the primary productive capabilities of Franklin District. In addition, demand (and take up of rural land for countryside living) is high in the northern part of the District in proximity to Auckland and the motorway network. It is in this area that a large number of lots created for horticulture still remain. These are dispersed across the area with little regard for locational constraints and adverse effects on character and amenity. If fully developed they may have a significant adverse effect upon amenity and rural character of this area.

The Franklin District Growth Strategy 2007 recognises the need for a countryside living area within the northern part of the District. It is considered appropriate to provide a zone for rural countryside living in the vicinity of Runciman. This area has good accessibility to State Highway 1 (motorway), State Highway 22 and Mill Road (the main link from the motorway to Pukekohe). It is immediately north of Pukekohe and in an area where there is high demand for countryside living. A comprehensive integrated method for the establishment of this Rural Countryside Living Zone shall be applied to address environmental effects, promote environmental enhancement and appropriate forms of development.

Within the wider rural and coastal areas it is appropriate to provide further countryside living only in the northern part of the District (Rural Environmental Enhancement Overlay Area), and only on larger lots that can absorb adverse effects, and where a combination of environmental enhancements and redistribution of existing vacant lots is achieved. Incentives can be offered for the transfer of titles of vacant lots into such developments.

A sustainable model for living opportunities outside of the three main towns, and indeed rural growth generally, would enable incremental intensification of selected villages, self servicing options within selected villages, a dedicated Rural Countryside Living Zone, limited area for rural environmental enhancement lots, and outside all of these, more limited opportunities for subdivision. The pressure on land generated by the demand for



*countryside living can be managed by directing such development to those areas where the effects of that development can be avoided, remedied, or mitigated.*⁴³

Plan Change 14 introduced subdivisions based on the transfer of rural lots. With regard to these subdivision provisions Plan Change 14 states:

there are many properties in the District which have several titles not yet developed. In some areas these titles are on land that is highly valuable for rural production as the soil is very versatile or are held in large property holdings which rely on large land areas and accessibility. The existing titles, if developed, would introduce further rural residential living with an increase in reverse sensitivity issues, greater conflict and greater irreversible fragmentation.

Through the transfer titles system landowners are offered another option for the use of these titles. Many landowners would like to realise the financial benefits of selling vacant titles, and with no other option may eventually sell these titles in their current form and location. The ability to transfer titles provides an opportunity for people living on VERSATILE SOILS and productive agricultural units to gain better land management and use of good soil while still benefiting from the fragmentation and selling of land.

*The transfer of titles to more environmentally sustainable locations enables the vacant lots to be used for countryside living opportunities. It is considered that the effects of transfer of titles within the same Management Area can be avoided, remedied or mitigated when appropriate performance standards and assessment criteria are met. It is likely that the transfer of titles within the same Management Area will have little or no adverse effect given that the Management Areas have been defined based on an assessment of the natural and physical resources at a local level.*⁴⁴

2.6 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The issues associated with the provision of Countryside Living Development across the region can be summarised as follows:

2.6.1 Effects on Character, Amenity Values as well as effects on Landscape Values

The subdivision, use and development of land can have a direct impact on character and amenity values as well as effects on landscape values. Higher levels of growth and development, such as that associated with countryside living type development, in rural areas can generate changes to the rural environment in terms of the number of buildings and structures, reduction of open space, noise, lighting and traffic.

The location, form and scale of countryside living development in terms of whether it is highly visible or discretely positioned can also impact on the rural character of the area. The design of housing and associated structures and landscaping also plays an important role on how development is perceived.

Character and rural amenity values are important factors when considering the amount, form and scale of development that can be accommodated in the rural area. An issue is how to plan for

⁴³ Refer to pages 6 – 8 of Part 16: Rural and Coastal Issues of Franklin District Plan: Plan Change 14

⁴⁴ Refer to page 31 of Part 22 Subdivision: Rural and Coastal Areas of Franklin District Plan: Plan Change 14



countryside living development in a way which ensures the overall character and the amenity values of the rural areas is maintained.

This is an issue across the entire region.

2.6.2 Effects of Soils/Productive Use of Land

Countryside living development reduces the overall amount of land available for traditional rural activities such as agriculture and horticulture. It can also foreclose the number and diversity of opportunities in the future for rural land based activities that utilise the soil resource through irreversible fragmentation.

The lot sizes associated with countryside living type development are often too small to support traditional rural activities, they may however be utilised for small hobby type farming activities.

An issue is therefore how to manage countryside living development so that it does not unsustainably affect rural land based activities that make use of the soil resource i.e. avoidance of areas containing versatile soils.

This is an issue most common to Rodney, Franklin, Papakura and Manukau and to some extent the Hauraki Gulf Islands.

2.6.3 Reverse Sensitivity

Reverse sensitivity involves the vulnerability of existing activities to attack from incompatible activities.

In the past, existing activities that produced adverse external effects were located in industrial or rural areas, which were sufficiently distant from residential areas or other sensitive activities. However, in the past few decades, the expanding New Zealand population and economy has seen growth and intensification of residential development occur closer to established activities; effectively eroding former buffer areas. Further, this increased economic growth has often resulted in the existing activities themselves growing in scale, sometimes with associated increases in their off-site effects.

The removal of such buffer areas, however, leads to potential amenity conflicts - a significant issue in the rural area. The Ministry for the Environment in its "Managing Rural Amenity Conflicts (February 2000)" publication identified that these conflicts occur:

- *Where there is a high rate of land use change, for example, where the population of an area is increasing or rapidly changing;*
- *Where the people coming into the area from outside have different values and expectations and wish to pursue different lifestyles from those already there;*
- *Where people arriving into the area establish a diverse range of activities and land use practices which are different from those formerly undertaken in the area; and*
- *Where the pattern of land subdivision means that people are settling in relatively close proximity to each other.*

Common conflicts relate to farming and forestry operations (i.e. activities creating noise, dust, odour and heavy trucks movements) and the impact on people living in the rural area for lifestyle reasons. An issue is therefore how to manage countryside living type development to avoid reverse sensitivity effects.



This is an issue most common to Rodney, Franklin, Papakura and Manukau and to some extent the Hauraki Gulf Islands.

2.6.4 Effects of Infrastructure

Physical infrastructure is necessary to address the effects associated with countryside living development and to provide people and communities with the facilities they need for day-to-day living as well as their health and safety. Physical infrastructure includes the provision of roads, public transport facilities, water supplies, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste disposal as well as communication and power facilities.

Most countryside living developments do not have reticulated wastewater disposal systems or a reticulated water supply. Countryside living developments in the rural area generally rely on tank or bore water supplies and their own on-site wastewater treatment facilities.

In terms of the roading network, the capacity of arterial roads needs to be addressed if further countryside living development is to be provided. Isolated countryside living, distant from existing main highway networks, can create high levels of transport movements across the region and adverse impacts on the local road network, much of which is not designed to carry large volumes of commuter traffic.

The provision of physical infrastructure and the provision of countryside development within the rural area are directly related. When development occurs in an incremental and unplanned manner, it can lead to inefficiencies in the provision of infrastructure. This can have an impact on the timing, allocation of funds as well as the quality or standard of the infrastructure provided. Where infrastructure is provided without consideration to its potential impact on growth, it can lead to demand for development in unwanted locations. Where un-serviced scattered countryside living development, not directly related to any existing services and facilities or within a reasonable proximity to existing towns and villages, is provided it raises issues for Council about how to effectively and efficiently provide the services that residents will eventually expect.

Another issue is therefore to ensure the provision of countryside living development is linked to decisions about the provision of infrastructure.

This is an issue across the region.

2.6.5 Effects of Natural and Ecological Values

Countryside living development has the potential to cause adverse environmental effects on natural and ecological values. This includes effects resulting from stormwater and wastewater as well as effects on natural features and habitats as a result of land development works.

An issue is how to plan for countryside living development to ensure that natural habitats, remnant native bush and vegetation, rivers and streams, wetlands and estuarine are maintained and enhanced.

This is an issue across the entire region.

2.6.6 Effects on Local Services including effects on Parks and Reserves

Countryside living development can also increase the demand for a greater range of goods and services being provided in the rural area. This can include the provision of more shops, businesses, medical and health facilities, libraries, schools and kindergartens, emergency services, supermarkets, cafes, restaurants, movie theatres etc. Accommodating these services into existing rural villages and



coastal settlements requires careful consideration to ensure they do not degrade or destroy the individual character and identity of the settlement.

Countryside living development can lead to increasing demands on recreational resources. Rural areas provide important open space for the region. The public open space network within the rural area offers a wide range of recreational and leisure activities such as swimming, boating, walking, hiking, cycling, horse riding and playing active sports. Parks and reserves also have an important role in protecting significant landscapes, ecological and heritage areas. The provision of a public open space network that meets the recreational and sporting requirements of the growing community; that meets access requirements and provides protection of key ecological, landscape and heritage areas and space for community facilities is therefore another issue that warrants consideration.

This is an issue across the region.

2.6.7 Effects of Developing Existing Rural Residential Titles

There are many properties across the region that comprise several un-developed titles this is particularly relevant in Rodney and Franklin. There is concern that if these existing titles are developed they would introduce further rural residential living into the rural environment that will increase reverse sensitivity issues, create adverse effects on character and amenity values as well as irreversibility fragmenting the rural resource. If not provided with options, landscapers wishing to realise the financial benefits of these titles may sell these titles in their current form and location.

Through transferrable title subdivision provisions landowners are offered another option of the use of these titles. At present, only Rodney and Franklin provide for subdivision based on the transfer of vacant rural residential lots. In Rodney this involves transferring lots created in the General Rural, East Coast Rural or Landscape Protection Zones to the Countryside Living Town zone – we understand that the Countryside Living Town zones are at capacity so there is not a lot of scope for the transfer to titles to continue. Within Franklin the transfer of rural lots is provided for on a one for one basis. This has its problems in that most titles are transferred from the southern areas of the district to the north.

Another issue is therefore whether provisions need to be provided for the transfer of existing vacant rural residential lots to more environmentally sustainable locations.

This is an issue most common to Rodney, Franklin, Papakura and Manukau and to some extent the Hauraki Gulf Islands.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are a number of issues associated with countryside living development which need to be carefully managed and balanced. Planning for the future of rural residential living opportunities within the rural areas is essential.

In order to avoid the adverse effects associated with countryside living, this type of development should be directed to dedicated countryside living areas located in close proximity to existing rural and coastal towns/settlements/villages where this type of living opportunity is close to, and of benefit to, existing community facilities such as schools, halls and community facilities. Constraints need to be imposed on the location, design and scale of these dedicated countryside living areas to minimise the impact of this development on character and amenity values and to ensure it is in



keeping with the scale of the rural and coastal towns/settlements/ villages in which it is to be located.

Directing countryside living development to areas in close proximity to existing towns/settlements/villages means existing transportation networks are able to be utilised; additional growth in these towns/settlements/villages may also improve the affordability and standard of public infrastructure such as wastewater treatment facilities able to be provided. In addition, by directing countryside living to dedicated areas, the effects of countryside living development on areas of versatile soils and the irreversible fragmentation of high quality productive rural land can be avoided as can reverse sensitivity effects on rural production activities including activities such as clean filling and quarrying.

