

## Section 6: National policy statements and national environmental standards

What is the general assessment of the project in relation to any relevant national policy statement (including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement) and national environmental standard?

As shown on the location Map 1 (**Attachment 2 in the Dropbox**) the site is not in the coastal marine area or coastal environment and therefore the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement is not relevant.

The following are relevant National Policy Statements:

1. National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (updated 2022) – NPS-UD
2. National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 – NPS-IB
3. National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (amended 2024) – NPS-FM

The following are relevant National Environmental Standards:

1. National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry 2023 (NES-CF)
2. National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2011 (NES-CL)
3. National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020 (NES-F)

### **General Assessment of National Policy Statements**

*National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (updated 11 May 2022)*

The NPS-UD sets out the objectives and policies for planning well-functioning urban environments under the RMA. Well-functioning urban environments are defined in Policy 2 of the NPS-UD (discussed below).

The relevant objectives and policies of the NPS-UD are:

**Objective 1:** New Zealand has well-functioning urban environments that enable all people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future.

Comment: The project implements this objective as it is designed through a masterplan process to ensure a well-functioning urban environment is created that provides for the social, economic and cultural wellbeing and the health and safety of the Upper Hutt City district. This includes providing much needed housing now and in the future on a site well located to the existing Upper Hutt district and well connected to nearby community facilities and transport links to the wider Hutt Valley. The site has been recognised as suitable for residential development and have few identified constraints.

**Objective 2:** Planning decisions improve housing affordability by supporting competitive land and development markets.

Comment: Utilising the fast-track system would implement this objective as it would provide for a rapid planning decision for the development of housing on an area that has previously been identified for future growth of Upper Hutt City that would provide for additional housing to meet the current and future demand. This will ultimately improve the housing affordability of the district as the increase in the availability of new houses will have a flow on effect of bringing affordable houses into the market.

**Objective 4:** New Zealand's urban environments, including their amenity values, develop and change over time in response to the diverse and changing needs of people, communities, and future generations.

Comment: The proposed development adjoins the Upper Hutt City urban environment and there will be changes, including amenity values, as a prominent site which is currently in commercial forestry and indigenous vegetation is developed for residential and mixed uses, while retaining areas of indigenous vegetation. These changes are anticipated in the NPS-UD objective and policies.

**Objective 8:** New Zealand's urban environments:

- (a) support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and
- (b) are resilient to the current and future effects of climate change.

Comment: The project will support a reduction in greenhouse gases by the proposed creation and protection of approximately 124.1 hectares of existing and replanted indigenous forest, including significant indigenous vegetation. The overall design of the development and infrastructure will plan for the future effects of climate change in order to ensure resilience to flooding and natural hazards.

**Policy 1:** Planning decisions contribute to well-functioning urban environments, which are urban environments that, as a minimum:

- a) have or enable a variety of homes that:
  - i. meet the needs, in terms of type, price, and location, of different households; and
  - ii. enable Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms; and
- b) have or enable a variety of sites that are suitable for different business sectors in terms of location and site size; and
- c) have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport; and
- d) support, and limit as much as possible adverse impacts on, the competitive operation of land and development markets; and
- e) support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and
- f) are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.

Comment: Of particular relevance are clause a), c), e) and f) of Policy 1. As previously discussed in the application, the project provides much needed housing in the Upper Hutt District on a site that has been long identified as suitable for

residential development due to its location and connectivity with Upper Hutt City and the remainder of the Hutt Valley. The project represents a well-functioning urban environment as intended by Policy 1.

By way of an overall statement, it is considered the proposed project is anticipated by the NPS-UD and will assist to achieve the intent of the relevant objectives and policies.

#### *National Policy Statement Indigenous Biodiversity 2023*

The objective of the NPS-IB is to maintain indigenous biodiversity across Aotearoa New Zealand so that there is at least no overall loss in indigenous biodiversity after the commencement date of the policy. The NPS-IB sets out a series of principles and policies to achieve this objective.

The focus of the policies is to take a precautionary approach when considering adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity, and by ensuring significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna are identified as SNAs using a consistent approach.

At the time of preparing this fast-track application Government is considering removing the need for local authorities to identify and protect SNAs through their planning instruments.

Notwithstanding this, a full ecological assessment of Development Area 2: Silverstream Spur and Development Area 3: Silverstream Forest has been undertaken, and areas of significant indigenous vegetation that meet the criteria included in Policy 23 of the Wellington RPS and the criteria in Sub-part 2 of the NPS-IB have been identified and mapped. Master planning has ensured development can occur on the site in a manner that retains and enhance significant indigenous vegetation. These are 'draft' SNAs that have not been formally recognised or categorised by the UHCC. The aim of the project is to ensure the areas of high ecological value are protected and enhanced and become a feature of the new community.

It should be noted that one draft SNA is located in Development Area 2: Silverstream Spur which is on public land (owned by UHCC). At the recent PC49-V1 hearings to rezone the Spur to Natural Open Space, there was some differences between expert ecologists for Council and GTC regarding the extent of this SNA, and it is expected a decision by the Independent Commissioners will work through that matter.

By way of an overall statement, it is considered the proposed development is consistent with and implements the intent of the objective and policies of the NPS-IB as it identifies and protects areas that meet the criteria for significant indigenous vegetation through sympathetic design.

#### *National Policy Statement Freshwater Management 2020 (updated January 2024)*

The NPS-FM sets out objectives and policies for freshwater management under the RMA to ensure that natural and physical resources are managed in a way that

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

The NPS-FM includes policies that focus on a number of relevant matters, including (amongst other things) ensuring tangata whenua are actively involved in freshwater management; considering the effects of use and development of land on a whole-of-catchment basis; responding to climate change; ensuring the health and well-being of degraded water bodies and freshwater systems is improved; no further loss of natural wetlands and national targets for water quality.

It is acknowledged that PC1 to the Natural Resources Plan establishes water quality targets for the Hutt River that any discharges from the proposed development will have to meet. Regional consents will be required from GWRC to ensure this occurs. There are several small streams and small wetlands in gullies primarily in Development Area 3: Silverstream Forest. These gullies and small wetland areas are on the lower slopes and often associated with the draft SNAs, and therefore they are unlikely to be developed. What will be important is to ensure sediment from earthworks does not enter the streams or small wetland areas, and as discussed in the assessment of effects, erosion and sediment control management plans and methods will ensure this does not occur. In addition the project intends to adopt a 'treatment in train' approach whereby stormwater is collected and treated prior to release either to land or water to ensure water quality is maintained. Climate change effects have also been factored into the stormwater design and engineering.

By way of overall statement, it is considered the proposed project is consistent with and implements the intent of the objective and policies of the NPS-FM as it avoids impacts on small streams and small wetlands and intends to manage stormwater to ensure water quality targets for the Hutt River will be achieved.

### **General Assessment of National Environmental Standards**

#### *National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry 2023*

The NES-CF intends to provide nationally consistent regulations to manage the environmental effects of forestry.

Of particular relevance to the project will be the harvesting regulations (Sub-part 6) and replanting (Sub-part 8) if replanting is appropriate in the future as part of the overall development.

Currently, the commercial forest on the GTC land is nearing maturity, and the intention is to undertake the harvesting once there is certainty regarding the consenting of the project.

Any harvesting will comply with the NES-CF regulations and requirements, and consents would be sought from GWRC should permitted activity standards not be met at the time.

*National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2011 (NES-CL)*

The NES-CL sets a nationally consistent set of planning controls and contamination values.

As stated in the application, the GTC land is not a Hail site in terms of the GWRC register of known contaminated sites. However on the Kiln Street site, within the Gateway there is some potential for contaminated land to be present from either the neighbouring property and previous industrial uses from the light industrial building on site. There are no known activities that would have occurred on the Silverstream forest that would lead to contaminated land.

Should any contaminated land be discovered while undertaking earthworks associated with the proposed development, the provisions of the NES-CL would apply and be complied with accordingly.

*National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020 (NES-F)*

The NES-F sets standards for regulating activities that pose risks to the health of freshwater and freshwater ecosystems.

Of relevance to the proposed project are:

1. Natural inland wetlands – as discussed in the assessment of effects, there are a number of small natural inland wetlands in the gullies, primarily in Development Area 3: Silverstream Forest. Restoration or maintenance of these wetlands are likely to be permitted activities, subject to conditions, otherwise a restricted discretionary activity consent would be required. Other activities are non-complying and include:
  - a. Vegetation clearance and earthworks within, or within 10m setback from a natural inland wetland; and
  - b. taking, use, damming or diversion of water within 100m setback from a natural inland wetland (if hydrologically connected or will change or is likely to change the water levels); and
  - c. the discharge of water within, or within 100m setback from a natural inland wetland (if hydrologically connected, the discharge will enter the wetland, or will change or is likely to change the water levels)
2. Culverts – as discussed in the application form, some culverts may be required for the stream that runs through Development Area 1: Kiln Street. Culverts are permitted if designed according to the directives in the conditions, otherwise a discretionary activity consent is required. Alternatively a bridge may be considered. Fish passage will also be considered as part of any culvert design and approval.