

Before the Independent Hearing Commissioner
Appointed by the Christchurch City Council

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of Plan Change 18 (Hendersons Residential Rezoning) to the
Christchurch District Plan

Cashmere Fields

Applicant

Evidence of Warren Richard Lewis

28 August 2026

Applicant's solicitors:

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Introduction

- 1 My name is Warren Richard Lewis.
- 2 I represent the group of landowners known as Cashmere Fields, seeking rezoning of the below properties (**the Site**) to Residential New Neighbourhood (**RNN**), excluding the stormwater management areas which will remain RUUF (**the Proposal**):
 - (a) 126 Sparks Road (Lot 1 DP 412488)
 - (b) 17 Northaw Street (Lot 2 DP 412488)
 - (c) 36 Leistrella Road (Lot 3 DP 412488)
 - (d) 240 Cashmere Road (Lot 23 DP 3217)
 - (e) 236 Cashmere Road (RS 41613)
 - (f) 200 Cashmere Road (Lot 1 DP 547021)
 - (g) 60 Leistrella Road, Part of Lot 406 DP 561520 (Balance Lot 349 as per RMA20213829)
- 3 I jointly own 17 Northaw Street, 126 Sparks Road, and 36 Leistrella Road, located in the northern portion of the Site (**the Property**).
- 4 While this evidence is provided in my personal capacity as a landowner and applicant, I am a civil and structural engineer by profession. I have been actively involved in the development of the residentially zoned part of the Site and, through that experience, have developed a detailed understanding of the requirements associated with developing and servicing the Site.

Scope of evidence

- 5 I have prepared evidence from a landowner perspective in relation to:
 - (a) Site use
 - (b) Residential development – the best use of land
- 6 Otherwise I defer to the economic evidence of Derek Foy and the evidence provided by Stuart Ford in respect of the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land.

Rural use

- 7 The Property was purchased by Cashmere Trust in 1999, approximately 27 years ago, and I have lived in the area for approximately 42 years. My two sons live in the area proposed to be developed and my two daughters also live in the area.
- 8 The Site has mostly been used for rural lifestyle, grazing small numbers of horses and stock, and limited cropping purposes (hay baling).
- 9 During the time that the Site was used for grazing, with limited use of farm machinery, for example hay balers and tractors, there were frequent complaints from residential neighbours of fire danger, noise, spray use, and dust – even with that low level of rural activity.
- 10 Safety issues have also arisen even with limited farm use, with children playing among large, stacked bales of hay which are heavy and there is a real risk of them toppling. There have been concerns about use of tractors and other large vehicles in residential surroundings, with children about. Neighbours using the farmland as a shortcut to and from their home create other safety issues, particularly at night. The close proximity to residential development is also an issue with roaming dogs raising animal welfare concerns for stock grazing.
- 11 The land is not economical to farm. Farm machinery such as tractors and bailers are becoming larger. This has meant that there is only one agricultural contractor willing to navigate city streets to cut and bale hay on the Site.
- 12 As there are no other farms nearby that could share equipment or aggregate operations with, to work the land we would need to utilise small machinery which would require high value crops to be economical. High value crops would require farm buildings such as green houses to avoid spray drift or spraying of outdoor crops which would create reverse sensitivity issues for the large number of residential neighbours around the Site. They would also require water supply, which I understand would not be available for the Site.
- 13 Greenhouse crops today do not require fertile soils as larger more economical crops are able to be grown by hydroponics. While subsistence type market gardening could be a viable use of the land, it is not an economic one.
- 14 The Site is no longer used for stock grazing for the reasons outlined. There are a small number of horses on the Brown property. Other than the existing residential dwellings¹, the Property is currently used for hay baling to prevent fire hazard and to keep the grass short as the land is also leased for dog exercise/training.

¹ Lot 1 DP 412488; Lot 3 DP 412488; Lot 23 DP 3217; RS41613; Lot 1 DP 547021

Current and anticipated development of the Site

- 15 I own that part of the Site which is currently zoned RNN and have been undertaking the development known as Cashmere Park, through the new part of Leistrella Road (extending from Cashmere Road) and Emily Knowles Drive. Development has required the formation of roads and installation of infrastructure. This has included the construction of the stormwater basin, recreational reserve and associated native plantings on the corner of Cashmere Road and Leistrella Road.
- 16 To date development has comprised of stand-alone single level dwellings. I expect a similar scale of development to occur over much of the Site, although some areas of higher density will be required to achieve density requirements for the RNN zone. I expect development of the remainder of the Site to achieve a similar level of amenity. As well as being personally invested in providing an attractive neighbourhood for future residents, this is appropriate for the market in which these properties sit and to meet the expectations of potential purchasers.
- 17 The rezoning of the land will provide for a residential development close to long established suburbs, shops and community facilities, popular walking/cycling trails and Pioneer recreation centre. People already enjoy walking in the area. The development creates a unique opportunity to enhance the natural environment and make it a space able to be enjoyed by all.

Proposed plan change 18 - the best use for the Site

- 18 Jade McFarlane has provided a detailed explanation of the development proposal at paragraphs [21]-[42] of his evidence.
- 19 Residential use already exists on and in the wider vicinity of the Site. The additional residential development sought by the plan change would utilise existing infrastructure in a location close to schools, shops and medical centres. The residential rezoning would enable approximately two thirds of the Site for residential use. One third of the Site will provide waterways, retention ponds, wetlands, and stormwater filtration for existing surrounding residential land.
- 20 In summary I consider the below key attributes support additional residential development at this location:
 - (a) It has significant infrastructure already in place, contrary to many other Greenfield sites.
 - (b) It is the closest Greenfield site to the City Centre and therefore the most sustainable area for Greenfield development.
 - (c) The surrounding urban area already provides established community facilities for new residents.

- (d) It provides for a proportionally much larger reserve area than would be provided by other Greenfield sites.
- (e) It provides for stormwater cleansing for those areas that drain into the proposed wetlands, reserve areas, and naturalized waterways.
- (f) It resolves the reverse sensitivity between existing rural activities and the neighbouring residential land.
- (g) It provides a firm naturalised planning edge to the urban residential zoned land at the east and north of Henderson Basin.
- (h) The environmental effect overall is much more positive than other Greenfield areas.
- (i) It adds to the size of the unique regional park that is being developed by the Christchurch City Council with land naturalized with native planting, springs accessible to the public viewing, naturalized waterways, and naturalized wetlands. As such it would combine into one large park the best features of Hagley Park, Travis Wetlands and Riccarton Bush.
- (j) It adds to the network of scenic cycleways/walkways and can provide links between Westmorland and Schools for children on cycles without having to use busy roads.
- (k) The rezoning would provide standalone residential properties that are the most desired type of property in Christchurch.

Conclusion

- 21 In my view, the continued use of the Site for farming is neither practical nor economically sustainable. I consider the best use of the Site is for the proposed residential development, which will provide desirable and in-demand housing in a logical and well-connected location, together with considerable environmental and recreational benefits.

Dated 28 August 2026

Warren Richard Lewis