

Overview of the Business Environment Policy

The approach taken in the District Plan to business activities involves accommodating rapid change, minimising restraints on competition, and recognising and responding to differing environmental implications. All three aspects are interrelated but the central focus of the plan is on enabling the community to meet its needs in an environmentally sustainable manner. In that regard the plan broadly differentiates between commercial centres, service areas and industrial areas with a wide range of business and related activities accommodated in all three. The plan also recognises that each area has significantly different environmental conditions, and different levels of amenity to be protected.

The city centre is recognised as a strong retail, administrative and entertainment hub for the city and wider Waikato Region. Suburban centres provide for convenient local shopping close to residential communities. For these commercial centres, pedestrian safety and convenience with a high standard of environmental amenity within an intensively developed compact area is emphasised.

The plan seeks to maintain the viability of the city centre and suburban centres by enabling a wide range of activities, while at the same time ensuring that the amenity values of each centre are protected. The plan does not attempt to protect established commercial centres from competition per se but does seek to prevent significant loss of vitality, vibrancy and amenity of the existing City Centre and neighbourhood centres as a whole which may result from significant dispersal of retail, office and entertainment uses.

Opportunities for commercial service development are available in a variety of locations throughout the city, particularly around the central area, at Frankton and at Te Rapa. The policy supports a wide range of business retail formats, together with levels of amenity that reflect the broader retail and service nature of the commercial service environment. While commercial service activities are also accommodated throughout the industrial areas of the city, the emphasis in the latter is on minimising potential conflict with industrial activities. There is also a need to ensure that efficient use is made of industrial land for industrial uses given the scarcity of industrial land availability in the City and to ensure a wide variety of choice of sites for new industrial uses. Controls over retail, offices and entertainment uses are therefore necessary in greenfield industrial areas.

For service areas, vehicular access and convenience predominates resulting in an emphasis on low intensity development which can involve extensive areas of land. A reasonable standard of environmental amenity is desirable though intensive levels of pedestrian amenity are not consistent with the overall intention of the mixed uses anticipated in these areas. Non-industrial activities have the potential to generate reverse sensitivity and accordingly must mitigate themselves from accepted industrial effects.

Within industrial areas minimum standards of environmental amenity are recognised, and accepted as being consistent with the overall intention for the area. Where these areas interface with established residential areas the management of effect is the responsibility of industrial users.

A key premise of the policy direction for business under the plan is that in order to enable people to satisfy their needs, restrictions on competition and on change should be minimised. Controls on development and activities in business areas are to be focussed on managing environmental impacts, maintaining accessibility

and ensuring consistency with local amenity values. It is not concerned with protecting an established pattern of business investment.