

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of submissions and further submissions on the **PROPOSED WAIKATO DISTRICT PLAN** Topic 3: Strategic Objectives

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF COLIN BOTICA ON BEHALF OF POKENO VILLAGE HOLDINGS LIMITED (SUBMITTER NO. 368 / FURTHER SUBMITTER NO. 1281)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is Colin Botica. I am a Director and Project Manager of Pokeno Village Holdings Limited ("PVHL"). I have held this project management position since the Pokeno development inception in 2005. My role included overseeing the 2008 Structure Planning, Plan Change 24 ("PC24") and Plan Change 21 ("PC21") processes, and now includes managing the implementation of PC24 and PC21 by way of development of residential and industrial lots, construction of infrastructure and creation of local amenities.

1.2 PVHL is a wholly owned subsidiary company of Dines Group and Fulton Hogan, with each having a fifty percent stake in the company. PVHL is developing land at Pokeno within the PC24 and PC21 areas known as Pokeno Village Estate and the Pokeno Gateway Business Park. PVHL's vision for Pokeno is to:

- (a) Create an urban village to thrive within a rural backdrop, offering a mix of residential, employment and recreational opportunities; and
- (b) Give businesses the benefit of a town that is growing alongside their needs, where employees can live and work in Pokeno.

Purpose and scope of evidence

1.3 The purpose of my evidence is to:

- (a) Provide an update of the development status of the PC24, PC21 and Plan Change 14, ("PC14"), land areas; and

- (b) Address the absence of the Pokeno Structure Plan 2008 ("PSP") in the Proposed Waikato District Plan (PWDP").

1.4 My evidence is structured as follows:

- (a) The development status of Pokeno (Section 3);
- (b) Overview of the PSP and the associated consultation exercises undertaken to underpin the strategy for growth (Section 4);
- (c) Issues arising in relation to the Pokeno Sports Park, which is identified in the PSP (Section 5); and
- (d) My conclusions (Section 6).

1.5 A summary of my evidence is contained in Section 2.

2. **SUMMARY**

2.1 PVHL is developing land at Pokeno as the Pokeno Village Estate and the Pokeno Gateway Business Park. PVHL's vision for Pokeno is to:

- (a) Create an urban village to thrive within a rural backdrop, offering a mix of residential, employment and recreational opportunities; and
- (b) Give businesses the benefit of a town that is growing alongside their needs, where employees can live and work in Pokeno.

2.2 PVHL anticipates that it will have concluded the spatial development of its land at Pokeno within the next 2 to 5 years after which there is no intention to undertake further subdivision and development. Pokeno is fully alert to the aspirations of the Waikato District Council ("WDC"), Futureproof and other parties to further grow and expand Pokeno. There is no opposition in principle from PVHL but PVHL considers that development should occur in a manner that does not undermine the vision for Pokeno as identified in the PSP.

2.3 The PSP has not been carried over into the PWDP. I consider this is a major flaw, given the detailed work which was carried out over many years and thoroughly tested to deliver the vision for Pokeno.

2.4 Extensive consultation was undertaken with various stakeholders during the Pokeno structure planning processes, and this consultation has been ongoing during the implementation phase. In my opinion the cornerstones of the

vision for the growth of Pokeno as identified in the PSP, remain relevant in the current planning environment.

2.5 The exclusion of the PSP and the inclusion of live zoning on an ad hoc basis is dubious because:

- (a) The PSP took a holistic approach to the transformation of Pokeno;
- (b) The PSP took into account short-comings and risks associated with some development options such as flooding, erosion, visual impacts, iwi considerations;
- (c) The PSP provides for community infrastructure that has been carefully considered in consultation with the community and other stakeholders. The exclusion of the PSP from the PWDP has the potential to undermine this, as illustrated by the proposal to use the Pokeno Sports Park as a stormwater attenuation device.

2.6 In summary, the PSP provides the proven framework for the growth and development of Pokeno and should be reflected in the PWDP.

3. **THE DEVELOPMENT OF POKENO**

3.1 PC24 and PC21 were major planning exercises that have brought a significant transformation to Pokeno. The overall development of PC24 and PC21 land is planned to cover 400 hectares and includes the following:

- (a) Over 2,400 residential sections, of which PVHL owns sufficient land for 1,850 sections;
- (b) Extensive recreational parks and sports grounds;
- (c) Additional school facilities;
- (d) Neighbourhood walkways with native planting and open spaces;
- (e) Revitalization of the existing town centre; and
- (f) 80 ha of industrial land for the Gateway Business Park, 30 Ha of which was owned by PVHL, (the majority of the 30 ha is now sold to industrial users).

The existing Pokeno Structure Plan Map is attached as **Attachment 1**.

Residential lots

3.2 PC24 and PC21 (combined) envisaged the following outcome for residential land owned by PVHL:

Residential Block	Total for PC24/PC21 Areas – No. Lots	Population – based on 2.7 people Per Lot	PVHL Area – No. Lots	PVHL Area - Population
Helenslee	920	2,484	771	2,082
School Block	100	270	0	0
Town Centre	400	1,080	64	173
Hitchen	1,035	2,795	1,015	2,741
TOTAL	2,455	6,629	1,850	4,996

3.3 To date, some 1,200 residential lots have been sold by PVHL or are under contract and 1,200 titles have been issued. Approximately 1,000 houses have been built.

3.4 The estimate of occupied houses through to the end of 2026 is as follows:

- (a) 1,200 by 31 December 2020.
- (b) 1,400 by 31 December 2021.
- (c) 1,600 by 31 December 2022.
- (d) 1,800 by 31 December 2023.
- (e) 2,000 by 31 December 2024.
- (f) 2,200 by 31 December 2025.
- (g) 2,400 by 31 December 2026.

3.5 As can be seen from the table, PVHL has a dominant role within the PC24 and PC21 land areas, accounting for 75% of the residential lots.

3.6 However, there is additional residentially zoned land immediately adjoining the eastern side of State Highway One, Pokeno. This land was zoned under

Plan Change 14. 125 lots have already been developed in the Kowhai Downs development. Other PC14 land could accommodate approximately 175 lots. Therefore, PVHL accounted for 67% (by number of lots) of residential zoned land in the greater Pokeno areas.

- 3.7 In total there are approximately 1,000 sections to be developed in the PSP area, of which PVHL controls 650. PVHL anticipates that it will have concluded the spatial development of its land in Pokeno within the next 2 to 5 years after which there is no intention to undertake further subdivision and development. PVHL is fully alert to the aspirations of WDC, Futureproof and other parties to further grow and expand Pokeno. There is no opposition in principle from PVHL but PVHL considers that development should occur in a manner that does not undermine the vision for Pokeno as identified in the PSP.

4. **OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE PLAN AND THE CONSULTATION WHICH UNDERPINNED THE STRATEGY FOR GROWTH**

- 4.1 Pokeno has a long history as a recognised node for future growth. In that regard, I note the following:

- (a) The PSP, was the result of a structure planning exercise carried out over many years. The PSP was informed by 26 technical reports, (plus two Cultural Assessments); all of which were peer reviewed. Additionally, significant and various forms of consultation were undertaken with Tangata Whenua, the local community, local and central government authorities.
- (b) The PSP formed the basis for a private plan change that was prepared by a landowners' consortium comprising Dines Group, Fulton Hogan, Hynds Pipe Systems and Winstone Aggregates and adopted by the Franklin District Council and became PC24 to the Franklin District Plan.
- (c) PC24 was ultimately adopted by the Franklin District Council and became operative, with modifications following a hearing, in 2010.
- (d) PC21 zoning additional residential land in the "Graham Block" became operative following a hearing in 2018.

- 4.2 The aim of the PSP is set out on page five of the document and is as follows:

"The aim of the Pokeno Structure Plan is to create a framework to guide the future development of Pokeno over

the next 20 years (to 2028), and will be used to inform the next District Plan review"

- 4.3 Despite the clear intention that the PSP should guide development until 2028, the PWDP does not recognize or make any reference to the PSP. In my opinion, nothing has changed so dramatically since the PSP was drafted that would justify dropping the PSP entirely.
- 4.4 The cornerstones of the vision for Pokeno as set out in the PSP are as follows:
- (a) The urban growth for Pokeno should be compact and contained and the existing settlement of Pokeno should remain the focus of "future" Pokeno.
 - (b) Pokeno should provide a mix of residential, employment and recreational opportunities to ensure a sustainable live work play community.
 - (c) Pokeno should establish as an "urban village in a rural setting".
 - (d) The urban growth of Pokeno should occur in a manner which maintains or enhances locally significant landforms, vegetation, water quality and key watercourses.
 - (e) The urban growth of Pokeno should occur in a manner which maintains or enhances significant elements of the existing amenity values and character of Pokeno village and the surrounding area.
 - (f) Activities with incompatible effects should be located at an appropriate distance from more sensitive activities to enable any incompatible effects to be appropriately managed on site or mitigated by distance or design.
 - (g) Pokeno should grow in an integrated manner particularly with respect to land use and transport to support a range of transport options is available.
- 4.5 The PWDP does not recognize or make any reference to the cornerstones of the vision for Pokeno, as detailed in the PSP.
- 4.6 On page 64 of the PSP the cornerstone of the vision for Pokeno (Pokeno should establish as an "urban village in a rural setting") is explained further and useful guidelines for the achievement of this vision are set out. These are as follows:

Explanation – Pokeno sits within a natural 'bowl', with an elevated rural backdrop visible in most directions, giving it a natural visual connection to the surrounding countryside.

It is considered that to ensure the rural setting characteristics of Pokeno are retained, the prominent ridgelines and outlook which create the natural bowl characteristics of the surrounding valley should be protected from development.

Guideline 1 – all land at a level above the RL 100m contour should be excluded from potential development due to its visual sensitivity to a wider audience.

Guideline 2 – land between the RL 60m to RL 100m contour lines also has a visual sensitivity at a more local level and therefore any development requires careful consideration to ensure low impact.

- 4.7 These guidelines have driven the development of Pokeno to date. A panoramic drone photo of the Helenslee Block, Pokeno is attached as **Attachment 2** to visually demonstrate how the “urban village in a rural setting” concept is being implemented. The photo is orientated to the North.
- 4.8 The PWDP does not refer to the PSP guidelines and it appears that no visual or landscape assessments have been undertaken for the Pokeno area. Neither does it appear to be supported by any Iwi consultation in relation to visual or landscape considerations in the Pokeno area.
- 4.9 PVHL has undertaken ongoing liaison with iwi over many years since the inception of the Pokeno project. I provide regular updates to Ngati Tamaoho and Ngati Te Ata on the project and periodically meet with their representatives to discuss progress. Iwi concern about the need to protect surrounding vistas was recorded in the original cultural impact assessments for PC24 and was a key driver of the guidelines in relation to the protection of surrounding vistas. From recent communications with iwi, I understand that these concerns remain, but I have seen no discussion of this matter in the PWDP materials.

5. **POKENO SPORTS PARK**

- 5.1 Submissions made by counsel for the landowners of the land described as “Pokeno West” in the PWDP indicate that there is a proposal under discussion to utilise the Pokeno Sports Park at Munro Road as a stormwater attenuation device to service residentially rezoned land upstream of the sports park. Although it is positive that flooding and erosion risk is being recognised in developing land upstream of the sports park, it is entirely inappropriate to assume that the sports park can be utilised as a stormwater facility at the expense of the Pokeno community.

- 5.2 The sports park is a structural element in the PSP, and was the result of years of consultation with the local community, sporting bodies, the Ministry of Education and iwi. Furthermore the sports park land and associated improvements / facilities are included in WDC's Long Term Plan and in a Development Contributions Agreement with PVHL.
- 5.3 The concept of such facilities as rugby, soccer and cricket fields along with netball courts have been promoted by WDC to existing and future residents for a number of years. The Pokeno School is expanding rapidly and as a result its current school fields are being compromised, however the sports park's location, being in close proximity to the school, opens up the potential for school use on a daily basis. There have been numerous discussions between PVHL, the Pokeno School, the Ministry of Education and WDC regarding the use of the sports park by Pokeno School children.
- 5.4 The proposal to use the sports park for flood attenuation is an example of the type of ad hoc planning that is potentially enabled by the absence of the PSP from the PWDP, to the detriment of the Pokeno community.

6. **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Pokeno's growth potential is being realised at an extraordinary pace. The speed of residential growth is being matched stride for stride by the industrial and employment growth. The irony that three major dairy companies are all locating in Pokeno is not lost on the older existing residents of Pokeno, (Pokeno historically being a dairy farming village). Any further growth of Pokeno has an established framework to utilise and an abundance of consultation and technical evidence available, all of which is summarised in the PSP.
- 6.2 There is no basis for throwing out years of work and community building undertaken by PVHL and other stakeholders through this planning process, especially given that we are only half way through the life of the PSP, with significant development still to go.

Colin Botica

15 October 2019

ATTACHMENT 1
POKENO STRUCTURE PLAN MAP

ATTACHMENT 2
PANORAMIC DRONE PHOTO OF HELENSLEE BLOCK