

Before the Independent Hearings Panel

In the matter of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**)

And

In the matter of Plan Change 78: Intensification (**PC78**) to the
Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) (**AUP**)

**Memorandum of counsel on behalf of Auckland Council to the
Independent Hearings Panel regarding correspondence from Minister
of Housing, Infrastructure, RMA Reform, and Transport, dated 12
March 2025**

Date: 14 March 2025



Solicitor on the Record
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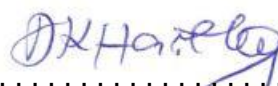
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MAY IT PLEASE THE PANEL

- 1 This memorandum is filed on behalf of the Auckland Council (**Council**) and further to the Council's reporting memorandum dated 28 February 2025.
- 2 We are instructed that since the Council's latest reporting memorandum to the Panel dated 28 February 2025, the Council has received a letter from the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform Hon Chris Bishop dated 12 March 2025. A copy of this letter is **attached** to this memorandum.
- 3 In light of the reference in the Minister's letter to early decisions on the City Centre aspects of PC78, the Council respectfully seeks an indication from the Panel as to when the Panel considers that it will likely be in a position to provide its recommendations to the Council on the aspects of PC78 that relate to Policy 3(a) of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020.

Date: 14 March 2025



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D K Hartley / A F Buchanan
Counsel for Auckland Council for
PC78

Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister of Transport
Leader of the House
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Sport and Recreation



12 MAR 2025

CB-COR1323

Mayor Wayne Brown
Auckland Council
By email: mayor.wayne.brown@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Dear Mayor Brown

Thank you for your letter dated 1 November 2024 and the subsequent conversations we have had on ensuring Auckland is able to grow and develop to be a more productive, prosperous, attractive, and well-functioning city that can lift economic growth and living standards for all New Zealand.

As Minister Responsible for RMA Reform, I appreciate your council working closely with my officials to explore options for updating the Auckland Unitary Plan to better address natural hazards, making progress on the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) and Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS).

Amendments to the direction

As a step towards supporting good urban outcomes and increasing development capacity, I am amending the Minister for the Environment's Direction for the Intensification Streamlined Planning Process to Auckland Council (the direction) on the timing and sequencing of decisions on Plan Change 78 (PC78). These changes will provide for early decisions to be made on the city centre components, by bringing forward NPS-UD Policy 3(a) decisions to 30 May 2025. Your council officers have indicated this should be achievable, while also providing impetus for the Independent Hearings Panel and council to prioritise the work required to bring this capacity on stream quickly.

To help enable effort to be focused on this work, I am removing the 'statement of expectations' from the direction, which previously included notifying a plan change to enable intensification within the Auckland Light Rail corridor and address the management of natural hazards by 30 April 2025. This change does not mean that council is not required to do the upzoning work within the Auckland Light Rail corridor, PC78 will still be required to give effect to the NPS-UD and implement the MDRS by 31 March 2026.

I also acknowledge that your council is committed to progressing a plan change to address natural hazard risk as soon as possible.

Resource management reform

In your letter and in our recent conversations, you outlined the need for further solutions for PC78. The Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill 2024 is intended to provide these solutions. The Bill, which is currently before the Environment Select Committee, provides a pathway forward to withdraw those parts of PC78 that cannot be progressed and to notify a subsequent plan change which would go further on enabling housing intensification and address natural hazards. The Select Committee will be considering workability as part of their process, and I expect an achievable outcome from this.

There are further opportunities ahead through resource management reform. It is my intention to introduce legislation to replace the Resource Management Act 1991 before the end of this year.

I look forward to continuing our discussions on these important issues, and I again thank you for all your work to date. Housing supply is a critical issue for the Government, and I appreciate the work you are doing to advance housing and transport solutions for Auckland.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Christopher Bishop". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christopher" and the last name "Bishop" clearly legible.

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform