Whenuapai Air Base - Planning Issues and Constraints
report

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Prepared for
New Zealand Defence Force

By
Beca Planning
A Division of Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd
Dear Sir

**Whenuapai Air Base - Planning Issues and Constraints**

Please find enclosed our final report discussing the planning issues and constraints surrounding land use disposal options for Whenuapai Aerodrome. We have amended the draft report to include the changes/additional information you requested in your email of 13 May 2003.

Please contact me if you have any questions or require clarification. We would be happy to discuss any further investigations or reporting you may require in order to progress making a decision on the future of Whenuapai Air Base.

Yours faithfully

*Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd*

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

On December 10, 2002, the Minister of Defence announced that the Government planned to withdraw from Whenuapai Air Base over a period of five years and locate all major New Zealand Air Force activities at Ohakea Air Base.

The purpose of this report is therefore twofold:

- To assist the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and Government in making a decision on the future use or sale of this land, specifically with respect to any strategic planning, environmental or regulatory (Resource Management Act 1991) issues.
- To develop scenarios, which represent a range of potential future uses, and test the strategic, environmental and regulatory issues against these scenarios.

In this respect, three scenarios for future use, which in turn may affect the land disposal process are investigated. The specific focus on these scenarios is the strategic, environmental and regulatory issues that may arise with each. Clearly at this stage of the process there are broad assumptions with each scenario. These three scenarios are:

- Scenario One: Combined military airbase/ civilian airport use.
- Scenario Two: Civilian airport use.
- Scenario Three: Civilian non-airport uses.

1.2 Background

In May 2001 the Government released a statement ‘A Modern Sustainable Defence Force Matches to New Zealand’s needs’. This statement, amongst other matters, resulted in an investigation to review the most efficient means of operating the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF), including the appropriate location for bases.

A subsequent Basing Study carried out in 2001 identified two key options: maintaining two North Island bases at Ohakea and Whenuapai and closing Whenuapai and consolidating at Ohakea. With the disbandment of the Air Combat Force (ACF) and a number of other maintenance, capital expenditure, resource management, and strategic considerations the Government made a decision to close Whenuapai Air Base over a five year period to consolidate at Ohakea. RNZAF has proceeded to plan on this basis.
1.2.1 Resources

The following is a list of the reference material used during the preparation of this report:

(a) RNZAF Basing Study 2001
   - Prepared by Royal New Zealand Air Force
   - Prepared in consultation with Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd (Beca)
   - Part 1: Main Report
   - Part 2: Ancillary Reports

(b) Auckland Region General Aviation Assessment Study
   - Prepared for Auckland Regional Council by Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd (Beca)
   - Dated October 1995
   - Beca advised by Geoff Winn (ARC) at a meeting on 27 Feb 2003 that this is the latest report, there have been no updates

(c) NZAP 33 Land Management Plan for RNZAF Base Auckland
   - Dated 12 September 1994
   - Document jointly prepared by Royal New Zealand Air Force and its consultants (Beca).

1.3 Existing Air Base

1.3.1 Base Auckland

RNZAF Base Auckland comprises the Hobsonville and the Whenuapai airfields and support facilities. Hobsonville is planned to close in 2002/2003. The future of Hobsonville Airbase is still being negotiated between Crown Agencies. Housing New Zealand and the Ministry of Education have signalled an interest in the Crown retaining some of the land for their purposes.

Today, with personnel strength of around 1,100, Base Auckland is home for:

- No.3 Squadron – Naval Support Flight (Seasprite)
- No. 5 Squadron (Orion)
- No.40 Squadron (Hercules and Boeing 727)
- The RNZAF Parachute Training and Support Unit

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1 Airforce website (www.airforce.mil.nz/about/hqbases/bak.htm)
- Training School for Air Force Police Dogs
- The RNZAF Aviation Medicine Unit
- The NZDF Command and Staff College.

Base Auckland is located on the northern reaches of the Waitemata Harbour (20 minutes drive north of Auckland CBD). It is close to Hobsonville Road (SH 18), which through the Upper Harbour Bridge connects it directly with Greenhithe and the North Shore. It is a major land use activity in the area. The airfields (Hobsonville & Whenuapai) are located some 1600m apart.

Figure 1.1

Location of Whenuapai Air Base
1.3.2 Location/Land Area

The suburbs of West Harbour and Brighams Creek adjoin Whenuapai to the east and west, respectively. The immediately surrounding area is rural/residential in nature. The nearest urban area (West Harbour) is approximately 1 km from the outer extremities of Whenuapai, to the east of Hobsonville Road (SH18).

Waitakere City Council and Auckland Regional Council are the authorities that have jurisdiction over the area in the vicinity of Whenuapai.

Whenuapai Air Base was originally constructed as a military airfield in 1937. During World War II Mangere airfield was taken over by the RNZAF and civil operations including international and domestic flights were conducted at the Whenuapai airfield up until 1965. The opening of Auckland International Airport (Mangere) in 1965 saw Whenuapai revert back to a military airfield, which in conjunction with Hobsonville formed RNZAF Base Auckland.

Whenuapai comprises 311 hectares of land and has three runways. Three quarters of all takeoffs on the main runway (03/21) are in a south-westerly direction towards the Waitakere Ranges as this is the prevailing wind direction.

At Whenuapai, development is grouped on the western side of the runways. The development comprises the following different functions:

- Aircraft operations and noise protection
- Support (ancillary to aircraft operations function or other defence use)
- Community Support (personnel related functions)
- Future Development (Airport)
- Weapons preparation area.

1.3.3 Runway, Taxiways and Hardstanding

The characteristics of the existing runways, taxiways and hardstanding areas at Whenuapai are described below:

- Whenuapai has three concrete runways. The main runway (03/21) is suitable for all aircraft in the RNZAF inventory. It is 2031m long and 45m wide.
- The second runway (08/26) is 1581m and 45m wide. It can accommodate a Boeing 727 only in high wind conditions from the north easterly or northwesterly quarter.
- A third cross wind runway of 1446m is available (12/30).
- Each of these runways has an associated circuit, which extends to the northwest and south of the runways. These circuits are aligned to minimise aircraft overflying urban areas as much as possible, although one does cross Te Atatu North and West Harbour.
Each of the approach and departure paths are protected by height restrictions designated in the Waitakere City and North Shore City District Plans.

High ground up to 440m in the Waitakeres is a constraint on approach paths from the southwest and overshoots in the opposite directions.

Currently Whenuapai can handle all types of fixed wing military aircraft up to Boeing 767 size, although weight restrictions apply to some aircraft types.2

1.3.4 Capacity

- Whenuapai airfield has been identified as having a maximum capacity of 200,000 aircraft movements per annum.3
- Airways Corporation statistics show that, the combined movements for Hobsonville and Whenuapai for the three years (1991-1993) ranged from 20,000 to 32,000.4
- Therefore the airport is currently operating well below capacity.

1.3.5 Regional Aviation

Apart from Auckland International Airport, Whenuapai is the only airfield between Hamilton and Whangarei able to accommodate large commercial jet aircraft.5

1.3.6 Road Infrastructure

Three major vehicular routes dominate the road infrastructure in the vicinity of Base Auckland:

- Northwest Motorway (SH16)
- Hobsonville Rd (SH18) – connecting Waitakere City and North Shore
- SH16 (Auckland – Helensville Highway)

The development of a new four-lane Upper Harbour expressway in Auckland is expected to be completed by 2007. In detail this will include:

- The construction of a second bridge across Auckland’s Upper Harbour and a widening of the existing causeway on the western side of the bridge (Transfund funding approved);
- A connection eastwards from the bridge to bypass Upper Harbour Drive (Transfund funding approved);

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2 Land Management Plan 1994
4 Land Management Plan 1994
5 Land Management Plan 1994
A from the western end of the causeway to the Northwest Motorway (SH16), which will provide an alternative to Hobsonville Road; and

An extension of State Highway 16 to Brigham Creek Road at Hobsonville

1.3.7 Utility Services Infrastructure

(a) Sewer System and Rising Main

The rising main is new and capable of providing service for the future. The sewer system has been rehabilitated in accordance with the disposal agreement between the RNZAF and the local authority and it is anticipated that it will provide service for the foreseeable future.6

(b) Stormwater System

The Base is served by a number of open drains that are fed by piped culverts from the runways, hardstands and buildings. The airfield has a field tile system that contributes to the open drain system as well. The field tile system is known to be partially ineffective but the magnitude is unknown.7

1.3.8 Proximity to Urban Areas – Existing Operational Restrictions

It is recognised by NZDF that, how the runways are used (i.e. for fixed wing/rotary wing aircraft), the types of aircraft using them and the frequency of use has an impact beyond the boundaries of the Base in terms of aircraft noise, low-flying aircraft.

In response to the concerns of nearby residents the RNZAF has implemented operational policies where practicable to reduce impacts on nearby residents8, including:

- Specifying circuit heights and directions for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft and where possible routing aircraft away from populous areas;

- Restricting night flying.

1.4 Background Assumptions

The implications of the possible future use of Whenuapai airfield for civil operations again, are evaluated in both the Land Management Plan 1994 and the Basing Study 2001.

The following conclusions outlined in those documents, have formed background assumptions to the assessment of issues/ constraints/ opportunities set out in this report.

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6 Basing Study 2001
7 Basing Study 2001
8 The Land Management Plan 1994
1.4.1 General

It is assumed that the information relating to the time it would take the RNZAF to withdraw from Whenuapai is still current. The Basing Study outlines that the redevelopment of Ohakea to accommodate Whenuapai based units would take up to four years. Over this four-year period Whenuapai would need to continue to provide a fully operational base, carrying out its current scheduled tasks and responsibilities.

1.4.2 Joint Military/Civilian Airport Use

In general, it is considered that the facilities at Whenuapai are capable of providing continuing operational service to the RNZAF for the short to medium term (0-10 years).9

A 10.2-hectare area of land on the south side of the airfield (currently part of the golf course) could be used for civilian operations, in conjunction with the existing RNZAF operations. This area has good road access and is immediately adjacent to the main 03/21 runway.10

The Basing Study 2001 outlined the following with regard to joint military/civil operations:

- If Whenuapai is operated as a military/civilian airfield, replacement of Runway 03/21 and the military aircraft hardstandings will be required. Runway replacement can be staged, with half the runway requiring reconstruction within 10 years (Year 8).
- The RNZAF areas must be kept in a clearly delineated secure environment. This implies that any civil operator must be separated from military buildings, operational areas and support facilities.
- Military aircraft movements must have priority. To maintain separation with military activity it may be necessary to construct a full-length parallel taxiway to the 03/21 runway dependent on the type of civilian activity proposed.
- Practical issues arise with the location of the 10.2-hectare civil use area, in relation to the current wastewater infrastructure. Further investigation would be required on how current capacity in the RNZAF wastewater network could be utilised.

1.4.3 Civilian Airport Operations & Runway Considerations

The Land Management Plan 1994 provides the following information on the limitations of the existing runway length in terms of civilian operations and on possible runway extension options.

- Not all civilian aircraft can use the runway at present, although with changes to the arrestor gear, the runway could handle a much wider range of aircraft types (with the exception of Boeing 747) with weight restrictions applying (e.g. a Boeing 767 can operate trans-tasman sectors from a 1700m long runway).

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9 Basing Study 2001
10 Basing Study 2001
For environmental reasons, if the runway was extended, an extension to the southwest would be preferred. A 150m south-west end extension for runway strip and RESA could be accommodated within the existing airfield boundary and would have little impact on adjoining properties, other than the control of fence posts and tree heights under the take-off obstacle limitation surface.

Any further runway length extension would require either diversion or closure of Brighams Creek Road around the runway end.

A maximum 680m runway extension (total length 2711m) plus 150m strip end and RESA could be constructed within the Mamari Road boundary. Five rural lots would need to be acquired for the runway extension and four rural lots west of Mamari Road would be affected by obstacle limitation heights, aircraft noise and fuel vapour droplets.

The maximum possible total runway length of 2,711m achievable with a southwest extension would cater for most civilian passenger and freight aircraft envisaged now with the exception of the Boeing 747, which could only use this length runway as a diversionary strip.

A slightly shorter extension of 2400m would meet these requirements without affecting operational capability of most aircraft able to use a 2711m runway. A 2400m equivalent length runway has less significant implications in terms of land acquisition and protection measures.

If no runway extension is undertaken, only limited future use of the resource could be made for civilian aviation given the operating restrictions of the airfield (i.e. the lateral clearances, the weight restrictions, the inability of Boeing 747s to land).

1.4.4 Civilian Airport Operations and Sewage Disposal

The RNZAF rising sewer main could be utilised to provide a sewerage disposal service to a civilian operation.11 RNZAF Base Auckland (Whenuapai and Hobsonville) has a contracted capacity (40 litres/second) with Waitakere City Council (WCC). The WCC system is connected to the Water Care main.

While, it is recognised that there may be spare flow capacity following the closure of the Hobsonville airfield, it is unsure whether this would be available to support civil operations at Whenuapai. WCC have indicated that there may be a requirement to renegotiate the current contract between the Waitakere City Council and RNZAF as a result of the closure of Hobsonville.

11 Basing Study 2001
1.5 Relevant Legislation

Other relevant legislation includes:

1.5.1 Public Works Act 1981

When the Crown no longer requires land it has acquired through the public works process, there is an established process under section 40 of the Public Works Act (PWA) for disposing of that land. This includes offering the land to other Government Departments, original landowners and iwi groups. While it is too early to say with any certainty at this stage, WCC officers consider that this process may not apply at Whenuapai should the land be transferred as an airport to an airport company. That is, the Airport Authorities Act stipulates that the provisions of section 40 of the PWA shall not apply in such circumstances.

1.5.2 Defence Act 1990

The Defence Act allows the Chief of Defence to undertake business activities for the purpose of fulfilling duties and activities under the Defence Act. It is also possible for the Chief of Defence to hold shares in an Airport Company if in doing so he is performing his functions and duties under the Defence Act. Thus, under this Act, the possibility exists of the Chief of Defence working in conjunction with an airport company to establish a new commercial airport operation at Whenuapai.

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12 ARC Strategic Policy Committee Agenda, 11 March 2003, Item B.5, p.15
2 Future Scenarios

There are a number of strategic and practical considerations in considering the potential future uses of the Whenuapai Air Base. Clearly in examining options for disposal, the NZDF will need to consider the range of uses that may be appropriate, including those which would meet the current of foreseeable planning, regulatory and environmental constraints.

The following section provides a description for each scenario including the assumptions used. These scenarios are necessarily broad due to the broad-brush nature of this assessment. Five scenarios were originally identified. These were narrowed down to three with the ‘Only military airbase use’ discarded on the basis of previous government policy decisions, and two other joint military/civilian airbase options merged to one. The three scenarios that are used as a basis for evaluation are as follows:

- Scenario One: Combined military airbase/ other civilian use
- Scenario Two: Civilian airport use
- Scenario Three: Civilian non-airport uses

A description of each scenario and assumptions is provided below. The general assumptions outlined in part 1.4 of this report, regarding the future use of Whenuapai for civilian airport operations applies as well to scenario 1 and 2.

2.1 Scenario One: Combined Military Air Base/ Civilian Airport Use

2.1.1 Description of Scenario and Assumptions

This scenario is applicable to the planned five-year withdrawal of defence functions as the RNZAF consolidates its North Island functions at Ohakea. During this period, there may be a ‘transitional’ joint military and civilian use, if this is operationally feasible and desirable. Civilian use could be an airport or other ancillary uses.

Alternatively this scenario could also be applicable if the NZDF retain some longer term ‘contractual’ ability to utilise the Whenuapai Air Base for ongoing defence functions while all or part of the remainder of the site could be used civilian airport uses (i.e. after the 5 year withdrawal transition period).

The assumptions of this scenario are that:

- The military uses would be similar to those currently occurring at the base, with gradual reduction in flights and numbers of personnel on the base as Squadrons move to Ohakea.
It is assumed that the re-introduction of civilian airport activities at Whenuapai is undertaken early within the five-year period during which the RNZAF is withdrawing its activities. The civilian uses could be either an airport, or other ancillary uses, with a gradual increase in civilian flights and personnel as military activity decreased.

The transition from military to civilian airport use would be a managed one, so that all potential for conflicts in either use of airspace or land was avoided through robust planning and operations management.

In relation to uses that involve civilian aircraft, it is presumed that heavier aircraft would be preferred over civilian general aviation (GA) traffic. This is to allow easier sharing of the airfield and airspace with ongoing military operations.

Some redevelopment of the base associated with civilian use, which may include either passenger services or landside facilities associated with airfreighting.

This scenario has the potential to generate both positive and adverse effects on the environment. These effects are identified at a broad level in the following table. Further assessment of these, and the issues that may arise, is included in Chapter 4.

**Table 1: Potential Environmental Effects Arising from Combined Military and Civilian Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Environmental Effects</th>
<th>Impacts on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ Air traffic management</td>
<td>■ Integrity of the Metropolitan Urban Limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Noise</td>
<td>■ Traffic Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Long term planning for airport protection</td>
<td>■ Stormwater management and sediment control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Rural and landscape character</td>
<td>■ Additional Infrastructure Requirements e.g. sewage disposal and water supply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ■ Additional Infrastructure Requirements e.g. sewage disposal and water supply                  | }
2.2 Scenario Two: Total Civilian Airport Use

2.2.1 Description of Scenario and Assumptions

This Scenario would see the cessation of defence activities, and a commercial civilian operator establishing at Whenuapai. This would occur after a five-year period of military withdrawal at the base as the RNZAF consolidates at Ohakea. It is also possible that this scenario follows from Scenario 1, if the NZDF withdraw over a longer timeframe.

The assumptions of this scenario are that:

- Civilian airport uses follow on immediately after, or in transition with, military uses.
- There are multiple civilian airport use possibilities within this scenario. These include:
  - Whenuapai being used for civilian GA traffic, in a similar way to Ardmore/Dairy Flat. It is unclear whether three such facilities would be needed in Auckland. It would be more difficult to fully integrate these smaller aircraft with military flights during any transition period.
  - Fully commercial airport, possibly owned/operated by a domestic/international new entrant to the New Zealand market. Previous media statements have raised the prospect of a company like Virgin Blue operating in New Zealand.
  - A freight only facility that provides frequent international and domestic services for New Zealand products for export or movement of goods in a timely fashion. Again, no commercial feasibility has been undertaken on any of these possibilities.
- The ongoing airport activities can be re-established under new Resource Management permissions once the defence purposes designation has been lifted (or altered). The likely basis for this assumption is that the future impacts of any civilian operation are equivalent to (or less than) the existing military ‘envelope’ of impact. Any activity resulting in a greater impact will likely have to go through a notified resource consent/designation process.
- All land currently within the base designation would be utilised for airport activities, either for facilities directly related to passenger or freight services, ancillary activities, or for ‘buffering’ purposes. It would not be sensible to allow subdivision, for non-airport related activity, of peripheral base land, as this would simply increase the potential for future complaints regarding adverse effects (i.e. reverse sensitivity)
- There is flexibility for development of ancillary activities related to the airport. For example, accommodation, retail, freight logistics, commercial development etc.
- Comprehensive development of airport and ancillary activities takes place sooner rather than later.
- Noise contours for a successful airport will need to be protected over the long term. Therefore, comprehensive noise contour modelling on the basis of forecasted use is
carried out early in the investigative process, and necessary protective planning measures are in place so that operations are not hindered.

This scenario has the potential to generate both positive and adverse effects on the environment. These effects are identified at a broad level in the following table. Further assessment of these, and the issues that may arise, is included in Chapter 4.

**Table 2: Potential Environmental Effects Arising from Civilian Airport Use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Environmental Effects</th>
<th>Potential Environmental Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ Air traffic management</td>
<td>■ Impacts on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Noise</td>
<td>■ Integrity of the Metropolitan Urban Limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Long term planning for airport protection</td>
<td>■ Traffic Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Rural and landscape character</td>
<td>■ Stormwater management and sediment control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Land acquisition and need for designation of adjoining land</td>
<td>■ Retail and trade effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Reverse sensitivity</td>
<td>■ Additional Infrastructure Requirements e.g. sewage disposal and water supply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Scenario Three: Only Civilian Non-Airport Uses

2.3.1 Description of Scenario and Assumptions

Under this scenario, the Whenuapai Air Base would be re-developed for civilian uses, other than an airport, such as residential, open space, education, industrial, commercial, or a mixed range of uses.

The relevant strategic policies and statutory planning documents of both the Auckland Regional Council and the Waitakere City Council are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this report. However, as the zoning of the Base and the location of the MUL impact on the possible range of uses that may be considered, a brief outline on these issues is provided below.

The underlying zoning of the airfield in the Waitakere District Plan is ‘Countryside Environment’. This is a standard rural zoning, which allows some subdivision of rural land. Once the ‘Defence Purpose’ designation is lifted, the underlying zoning would apply.

The Whenuapai Air Base is located outside the Auckland Regional Council’s (ARC) metropolitan urban limits (MUL). The MUL places a region wide ‘limit’ on the extent of urban growth, while providing sufficient capacity within the urban area. Changes to the MUL would need to be agreed through the Forum.

The assumptions of this scenario are that

- At the end of the five-year period of military withdrawal, the existing designation will be lifted.
- Civilian non-airport uses would not establish on the site until the military have completely withdrawn. However, gaining the necessary RMA permissions, e.g. subdivision consent/plan change to provide for future uses, could start immediately.
- If the MUL is not moved to include the Air Base, the civilian uses which will be able to establish on the site will be limited to ‘rural activities’, which could include rural-residential subdivision.
- The overriding presumption is that any ‘urban’ density residential, commercial, educational, or other type of facility attempting to locate on the site is likely to have difficulty without broad political support, including the Regional Growth Forum.
- Should the MUL be moved to include the Whenuapai Airbase, a plan change/variation to the District Plan, to provide for a zone(s), which allows a wider range of uses (i.e. other than ‘rural’), could be lodged with Waitakere City Council. This could be drafted to provide maximum flexibility for future use.
- Because of current demand and growth rates, it is unlikely that development at an ‘urban’ density would actually occur on the Whenuapai site for some time. This is because there are already areas in Waitakere City, immediately to the north of the
current MUL, which are identified in the Growth Strategy as potential future urban growth areas, e.g. Massey North-Hobsonville Corridor.

- Any development would need to be cognisant of the Upper Waitemata Harbour Study. The results of this study are not expected to be released, until late 2003.

This scenario has the potential to generate both positive and adverse effects on the environment. These effects are identified at a broad level in the following table. Further assessment of these, and the issues that may arise, is included in Chapter 4.

Table 3: Potential Environmental Effects Arising from Civilian Non-Airport Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Environmental Effects</th>
<th>Remediation of contaminated land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrity of the Metropolitan Urban Limits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise (positive)</td>
<td>Stormwater management and sediment control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Infrastructure Requirements e.g. sewage disposal and water supply</td>
<td>Traffic Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural and landscape character</td>
<td>Retail and trade effects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Analysis

The purpose of this section is to identify the significant strategic and potential political issues associated with the future use of the Whenuapai land. In addition, the important regulatory and RMA issues that will affect the future use and disposal of the land are discussed. This analysis is based on the potential environmental effects identified in relation to each of the three scenarios. Identification of key issues arising from this statutory analysis is included in the following chapter of this report.


3.1.1 Existing Designation

The current operations at the Whenuapai Air Base are authorised under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA 1991) by way of a designation in the Waitakere City District Plan. The Base is designated for “Defence Purposes – RNZAF air bases and associated defence activities”. The requiring authority for the designation is the Minister of Defence.

The designation allows the RNZAF to carry out any defence work on the Base, provided the project or work is in accordance with the designation. However, where a project of work is to be constructed on designated land the requiring authority is required to submit an outline plan of those works to the territorial authority pursuant to section 176A of the RMA 1991. The purpose of the outline plan is to enable the territorial authority to request changes before construction commences.

The District Plan includes specific conditions, which apply to the designation. These conditions include the requirement for aircraft operations at the Base to meet specific noise standards as set out in paragraph 3.1.2 below.

The District Plan also contains special restrictions, known as “Protection Measures”, which accompany the designation. To ensure that new development does not interfere with aircraft on approach/takeoff or circling from the airfield, restrictions are placed on the use of land and the erection of buildings directly beneath or within the boundaries of the approach surfaces to the airfield.

3.1.2 Noise Emissions

It was recognised in the Land Management Plan that, the principle effect arising from operations at Whenuapai is noise. The noise impact of the airfield on its environs is determined by three principal factors:

- a) The orientation of the runway(s)
- b) The type of aircraft and frequency of landings and takeoffs
- c) The relative proximity of neighbours (particularly residential activities)
(a) Noise Boundaries in the District Plan

A “Noise Control Area” was introduced into the Waitakere City Proposed District Plan 1995, (and supported by the NZDF) as part of a package of environmental measures to protect the sustainable management of Whenuapai Air Base. The noise control area is defined by noise boundaries, the air noise boundary and the outer control boundary. Noise limits of 65Ldn and 55Ldn respectively are set at these boundaries and the airfield is not allowed to exceed these limits. A map showing the noise control area for Base Auckland is contained in Appendix III of the District Plan Maps. This map is reproduced as Figure 3.1 of this report.

For the purpose of this control noise is measured in accordance with the NZSA “Airport Noise Planning and Land Use Management” (NZS 6805: 1992) and calculated, as stated in NZS 6805:1992, using Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Integrated Noise Model (INM) and records of actual aircraft operations and calculated as a 90 day rolling logarithmic average.

The noise standards in the District Plan are designed to protect the operational capability of the Base by preventing residential encroachment and to protect adjacent land users from aircraft noise. The land uses inside the noise boundaries are controlled, for example no new residential developments are allowed inside the air noise boundary.

(b) Noise Analysis Study

The Land Management Plan 1994 outlines that, a noise analysis study was undertaken with the primary aim of establishing the noise boundaries (Ldn 65 to 55), produced by existing aircraft and also produced by the predicted number of aircraft movements up until the year 2010, based on the INM.13

In order to predict the air noise boundary for a 10-20 year future period (Ldn 65 contour), the aircraft movements recorded for 1993 were doubled (although the predicted growth rate is only 25% above 1990 levels). In addition to a small growth in airforce operations, an allowance for commercial jet aircraft was made. Two daytime and two night-time arrivals and departures of a Boeing 737-300 were added to the model. It was envisaged, at that time, that the B737-300 would be used for freight operations.

The air noise contours are based on average daily noise emanating from aircraft taking off and landing at Whenuapai up to 50,000 movements per annum. The noise contours cover B727-200, Skyhawk, Aermacchi, Iroquois, Seasprite and Sioux. The noise contours will be generous in terms of their extent now that quieter aircraft have replaced some originally modelled, and with a reduction in air movements.

The other base data important to the prediction of the noise contours is the runway dimensions and flight tracks. For the purpose of the modelling, it was assumed that at Whenuapai that the runway 03 would be extended 150m and runway 21 would be

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13 The noise boundaries established by the noise analysis study appear to be the same or substantially similar to the noise boundaries in the current version of the WCC District Plan.
extended by 520m (providing a total equivalent runway length of 2400m). The flight tracks adopted were, straight for aircraft arriving and departing the airport.

The setting of noise boundaries around the airfield has effectively sets a ceiling on the total operations at the airfield.

### 3.1.3 Existing Resource Consents

There are two current resource consents for RNZAF Base Whenuapai, approved by the Auckland Regional Council (ARC):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air</th>
<th>Expires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issued for Base Auckland to cover general discharges to air.</td>
<td>Expires 1 February 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stormwater discharge</th>
<th>Expires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relates to stormwater from aircraft hardstand at Whenuapai, comprising taxiway and parking areas and from existing runway areas into an unnamed tributary of the Rarawaru Creek.</td>
<td>Expires 31 December 2028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires that the maximum rate of discharge in a 1 in 5 AEP shall be 2.41 m³/second.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions of consent require a Stormwater Management Plan be prepared for the fuel and oil separator devices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land/Water</th>
<th>A consent has been applied for by NZDF and is currently being processed by Council.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closed Landfill west of Whenuapai Airfield. On the edge of the Waiarohia Inlet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3.1: Air Base Noise Map
3.2 Strategic and Political Settings

3.2.1 Auckland Regional Council Strategic Policy Direction

At the meeting of the Auckland Regional Council’s (ARC) Strategic Policy Committee on the 11 March 2003, it was resolved:

“That the ARC become involved in discussions as one of the signatories to the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement, the Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Economic Development in relation to the future Landuse of the Whenuapai Airbase and report any significant developments back to the Strategic Policy Committee.”

The Council Officer’s report to the Committee (dated 19/2/03) outlined the following:

- The Whenuapai Air Base is currently considered to be regionally significant infrastructure;
- Current controls on flight paths and noise levels allow it to be located in a sensitive rural environment;
- While a commercial airport at Whenuapai may not be desired at this stage, the ability to establish one in the future should be maintained;
- The changing nature of urban growth in the areas surrounding Whenuapai needs to be comprehensively considered to ensure that the option of operating a commercial airport at Whenuapai in the future, is not precluded.
- The future of Whenuapai Air Base needs to be considered in a regional context, rather than just Whenuapai and Waitakere City.
- The opening of a commercial airport may come at a significant economic cost, particularly in the short term. Whilst the airbase currently creates local benefits for Waitakere City, a commercial airport may not create any regional benefits unless it has a different focus to the Auckland International Airport.

(a) Regional Growth Forum

Under the RMA 1991 the Auckland Regional Council functions are to promote integrated management of natural and physical resources. The two primary tools for achieving this in the Auckland region are the Regional Policy Statement (ARPS) and the Regional Growth Strategy14.

One of the key issues facing Auckland is urban growth. Both the ARPS and RGS attempt to address this in a coordinated fashion. An important tool for managing growth is the

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14 The Growth Strategy was produced by the Regional Growth Forum, which consists of elected representatives from the ARC, and the region’s TLA’s. It is a standing committee of the ARC. The purpose of the Growth Strategy is, “to ensure growth is accommodated in a way that meets the best interests of the inhabitants of the Auckland region”.

metropolitan urban limits (MUL). The MUL is a land-use planning tool used to protect significant landscapes, environmental features and the operation of regionally significant infrastructure (e.g. AIAL). The MUL is contained in the Regional Policy Statement, and since the inception of the Regional Growth Forum, reflects the long term Regional Growth Strategy. It effectively places a region wide ‘limit’ on the extent of urban growth, while providing sufficient capacity within the urban area.

The Whenuapai Airbase is located outside the MUL and consequently any change to the current planning provisions, to provide for either civilian airport, or non-airport uses, would need to be considered in terms of the Auckland Regional Policy Statement (ARPS) and the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy.

(b) Northern and Western Sectors Agreement

While the Growth Strategy provides for a 50-year vision for Auckland, further detail is provided in four sector agreements around the region, which account for growth over the next 20 years in terms of form, location and major infrastructure issues to service that growth.

In this instance, the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement (October 2001) governs the future growth of the Whenuapai and surrounding areas. The North Shore City Council (NSCC), Waitakere City Council (WCC), Rodney District Council (RDC) and the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) are signatories to the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement.

This agreement sets out in broad terms the overall growth expectation for the Northern Strategic Growth Area (NorSGA) and the issues that will need to be considered and addressed before urban development can proceed. The NorSGA includes (but is not limited to) Hobsonville peninsula, the Whenuapai basin, Redhills and Massey North.

It is anticipated that the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement will be reviewed and updated every five years.

i. Future Growth Capacities

The RGS has allocated future population growth capacities by sub-regional and territorial areas based on analysis of population projections and application of the key principles of the strategy. The Northern and Western Sectors Agreement sets out how the allocated growth capacities for these two sectors can be accommodated in appropriate locations, form and sequencing over the next 20 years. It also identifies the key issues associated with managing this growth, and sets in place agreed principles and methods/actions to address these issues.

The Northern and Western Sectors Agreement has allocated a population growth capacity of 74,500 to the year 2021 for Waitakere City. The 1996 population of Waitakere City was 156,000.

Apart from providing for population capacities, the Sectors Agreement seeks to promote a better distribution of business and employment opportunities locally as part of growth management. For example, it is proposed that business zoned land in Waitakere City will
increase from 620 hectares in 1996 to 820 hectares in 2021. Further information on growth capacities allocated under the Sectors Agreement is contained in Appendix B of this report.

ii. Future of Former Airbase Land and Remaining Airfields

The Regional Growth Strategy recognises that the Hobsonville/Whenuapai area will change, with growth identified at Hobsonville Airbase in 0-5 years. The territorial authority signatories of the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement have come to an understanding regarding the principles and actions concerning the future of the Air Base land.

Those relevant to Whenuapai are shown below.

**Agreed Principles**

Sector Partners will:

- Recognise the current role of Whenuapai as a military Air Base and keep options open for its future use

**Agreed Actions**

Territorial Authorities in the Northern and Western Sectors will:

- Consult each other regarding any changes to the status of development proposals for Hobsonville, Whenuapai, Parakai and Dairy Flat.

Territorial Authorities in the Northern and Western Sectors will jointly:

- Investigate options for the future use of Whenuapai Air Base taking into account their feasibility and potential positive and negative effects.

(e) **Upper Waitemata Harbour Study**

North Shore and Waitakere City Councils, Rodney District Council, Transit NZ and the Auckland Regional Council have started a collaborative project assessing the potential effects of current and potential future development on the Upper Waitemata Harbour. The Upper Waitemata Harbour Study is designed to provide the information that will allow development delivering the maximum benefit for people at the lowest cost to the environment.

The Upper Waitemata Harbour has a wide ‘catchment’ of 202 square kilometres, taking in drainage and run-off from Waitakere, North Shore City and Rodney District. This particular section of the Waitemata is home to a diverse variety of bird life, marine life and represents some of the largest untouched natural environmental resources in the harbour.

The study will look at the extent of sediment and contaminants running off the land and waterways, develop maps of the area to illustrate current stress levels, and will run...
extensive modelling exercises to predict what future effects might be. The Study runs from mid-August 2002 to June-2003. It is expected that the final report outlining the results of the Study will be available by September 2003.

### 3.2.2 Waitakere City Council Strategic Policy Direction

Structure planning in the northern rural area of Waitakere City including the catchments surrounding the Whenuapai area (i.e. Waiarobha, Totara, and Riverlea catchments) has been put on hold pending further strategic assessment by Waitakere City Council in the Northern Strategic Growth Area.

WCC have established a mayoral taskforce to assess the options for future landuse of the Whenuapai Airbase land. Council officers from WCC, NSCC and ARC are working together on this issue though various forums. The aim is to enable councillors appointed from all the region’s councils to participate in working together on options for the future use of the airbase. There are a number of differing views on the best approach to resolving the future use of the airbase from what we can understand, however Waitakere and ARC have been very active in seeking a strategic approach to resolving the various planning and commercial issues.

WCC officers have met with RDC and NSCC for preliminary discussions regarding possible options for the future of the airbase land. Two main options have been discussed to date:

- Retain the airbase infrastructure and upgrade it for commercial airport use; and
- Use the land for development such as housing, industrial, parks or a mix of these developments.

WCC have indicated at this preliminary stage, that they are in favour of a land use, which utilises the existing infrastructure and provides for economic development.

#### (a) Status of Whenuapai Air Base

Waitakere City Council has adopted a resolution regarding the Whenuapai Air Base that promotes commercial use of the airport and economic development on surrounding lands. The Council have considered the existence of both the Whenuapai and Hobsonville Air Bases as positive influences on the District offering regional benefits to both the economy and the community.

The Council has discussed adopting a stance to protect the options presented by the vacated Whenuapai Air Base, and requested that the Chief Executive ensure that any future development of the Whenuapai Air Base should not preclude it from functioning as a commercial airport.

In December 2002, Mayor Harvey recommended the following:

1) **That Waitakere City Council in its approach to the development of the wider Northern Regional Strategic Growth Area give priority to land uses that promote economic development.**
2) That Council requests that the New Zealand Defence Force or other Crown entity retain ownership of the Whenuapai Airbase Land for the foreseeable future to ensure the long-term potential of the air base as an operating airport is retained.

(b) Hobsonville Corridor

The Hobsonville Corridor area was identified in 1999 in the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy as a key area for future growth in the next 50 years. The area is made up of the undeveloped land between Hobsonville Road that marks the edge of the current Metropolitan Urban Limit, and the proposed State Highway 18 stretching from Westgate to Hobsonville.

The area earmarked for potential growth does not infringe upon the Whenuapai Air Base Military Designated area, however the proposed development will enable residential and commercial areas to locate closer than presently allowed by the MUL to the existing Air Base. The development of the 'Hobsonville Corridor' area is still in the preliminary planning and consultation stages. It is likely that development such as the Hobsonville Corridor will minimise options for the Air Base to be retained for aircraft use as more intense development adjacent to Air Base boundaries will ensue issues regarding aircraft associated land uses, and noise.

The Auckland Regional Council has confirmed that the Hobsonville Corridor has in principle been identified for long-term urban growth. However water quality studies for the Upper Waitemata Harbour may not be completed until late 2003.

(c) Northern Strategic Growth Area and Metropolitan Urban Limits

Massey North (west of the new State Highway 16) and the Hobsonville Corridor (south of the new State Highway 18) are two areas that have been identified in the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement as potential future urban areas, with an indicative development horizon of 20 years. The two new areas under consideration, form part of the Northern Strategic Growth Area (Nor SGA).

At present the whole of the NorSGA is outside the Metropolitan Urban Limit (MUL) of the Auckland Regional Council. However there is an agreement in principle in the Regional Growth Strategy that urbanisation will occur in certain areas of NorSGA, and that the MUL will be extended to include the areas identified for urban expansion in the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement. The timing and location of the extension of the MUL has not yet been determined, although the new MUL will likely be defined in the north by the new State Highway 18 route.

The Auckland Regional Council has concerns about the effects of development on the water quality of the Upper Waitemata Harbour, and wishes to undertake modelling of these effects before agreeing to an extension of the MUL.

Preliminary work by Ecowater Solutions indicates that urbanisation with passive stormwater control mechanisms could in fact have a positive effect on water quality in the Upper Harbour. Waitakere City Council has lodged comprehensive catchment
management plans with the Auckland Regional council for two areas within the Whenuapai Basin, Waiarohia and Totara catchments.

Another significant constraint is the lack of wastewater disposal capacity. Addressing this issue will be a significant task and is likely to take at least 5 years to resolve.

At present the expectation is that the Hobsonville Corridor and Massey North areas will begin to be developed within a 5-10 year time frame, as indicated in the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement. The State Highway 18 motorway is expected to be complete in 2007, assuming that construction starts in 2003.

(d) Waitakere City Council – EcoCity Objectives.

Waitakere City Council regards the development of the NorSGA as a significant issue as it provides a key opportunity to realise many of the Council’s EcoCity objectives. There are a number of major issues that need to be resolved and it is anticipated that it would be at least eight years before urban development would commence.

The strategic objectives sought from the Hobsonville Corridor/Massey North planning project consist of increasing community based employment levels, effective transport networks, and urban growth management in an environmentally sustainable fashion.

Waitakere City Council’s strategic objectives are based primarily on managing future growth. Their current objectives are based on the following considerations:

- Council’s strategic direction for sustainable urban development;
- There is less than 50 hectares of vacant working (business) environment land available in the current city area;
- Land that is available tends to be in small isolated sites that are not attractive to modern high value added businesses;
- The only greenfields area available for large-scale business development in the City is the Northern Strategic Growth Area;
- Regional and Council Business Surveys have shown that businesses regard access to motorways and arterial roads as the single most important location factor.

The Northern area of Waitakere City is considered critical to Waitakere in meeting the residential, employment, leisure and social needs of its future residents and workers. Waitakere City Council has an expectation that the Hobsonville Corridor and Massey North areas should provide an innovative solution to providing a high-intensity working environment with a low level of environmental impact, and a vision for the area should consider a wide range of development possibilities that take into account future employment and living trends.
(e) Waiarohia Catchment Structure Plan

In 1999, the Council initiated a structure plan for the Waiarohia catchment in the northern part of Waitakere City. The decision to prepare a structure plan for this catchment arose out of an appeal on a subdivision consent for a site within the catchment.

The Waiarohia Structure Plan area is situated within the Northern Strategic Growth Area north of proposed State Highway 18. The northern part of the structure plan area includes a large part of the Whenuapai airbase. The catchment drains to the Upper Waitemata Harbour.

In December 2001, the Environmental Management Committee resolved to publicly notify the Waiarohia Structure Plan as Variation 90 to the Waitakere City Proposed District Plan. Variation 90 was notified in February 2002, however due to the increasing strategic importance of this area, in particular opportunities arising from the impending vacation of the New Zealand Defence from the Whenuapai airbase, the Committee resolved in October 2002 to place Variation 90 on hold for 18 months. This was to enable further strategic studies to be completed for the wider Northern Strategic Growth Area.

(f) Hobsonville Air Base Development

The Hobsonville Air Base covers 170 hectares, 70% of which is undeveloped. The Mayoral Taskforce on Hobsonville was established in April 2000, to create vision of how the Base could best serve the city after the departure of the Air Force. The resulting Report of the Mayoral Taskforce on Hobsonville described a mix of housing, retail and commercial activity, recreation and open spaces, plus a proposed marine industry manufacturing centre (Marine Industry Cluster) centre around a number of companies building super yachts.

In November 2002 Housing Minister Mark Gosche formally sought part of the former Hobsonville Air Base for state housing purposes. This particular area to be known as “Lot 2” comprises 42 hectares, which would be established with a mixture of housing including affordable freehold properties and low rent housing.

The Housing Minister envisages the creation of an integrated urban community, involving housing, schools, parks and businesses. Final plans for development are intended to be jointly undertaken with Waitakere City Council as the proposal has the support of their Mayor Bob Harvey.

The Housing development has the intention to meet the shortfall of affordable housing in Waitakere, which is coupled with limited opportunities for acquiring land in the area. The development will also seek to create employment opportunities.

In addition to the Lot 2 land, the Housing New Zealand Corporation is keen to acquire more land from the Hobsonville site as NZDF Force declares it surplus.
3.3 Relevant Planning Documents

The following statutory planning documents, written under the RMA 1991 need to be considered when assessing the issues, opportunities and constraints for the future use of Whenuapai:

- Auckland Regional Policy Statement 1999
- Waitakere City Proposed District Plan 1995
- Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air Land & Water 2001

3.4 Auckland Regional Policy Statement 1999

The Auckland Regional Policy Statement (ARPS) became operative on 31 August 1999. Its aim is to achieve integrated, consistent and co-ordinated management of the Region’s resources. Its aim is also to provide greater certainty over the ways that natural and physical resources are to be managed and hence create an awareness of the constraints and opportunities in the Auckland Region.

It is considered that the direction provided by the following issues and policies in the ARPS is relevant to the consideration of the future uses of Whenuapai Air Base. The full text of these issues/policies has been reproduced in Appendix C to this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Specific Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.3</td>
<td>Key Strategic Resource Management Issues</td>
<td>Issue 2.3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Issue 2.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.5</td>
<td>The Strategic Direction</td>
<td>3rd policy under 2.5.2 - Strategic Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.6</td>
<td>Regional Development</td>
<td>Policy 2.6.1 – Urban Growth Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Policy 2.6.4 – Rural Areas</td>
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</table>

3.4.1 Issues

A key strategic resource management issue for the region, identified in the ARPS, is that urban development is threatening several environmental qualities and thresholds (Issue 2.3.2). The ARPS states that the future direction and nature of urban development is to be the subject of an ongoing programme of urban growth monitoring and management. In terms of West Auckland, the following were identified as constraints, which need to be included in this programme:

- The Waitakere foothills, which are an important visual foreground to the Waitakere Ranges.
- The pollution sensitive upper Waitemata Harbour, a regionally significant estuarine area.
- The operational requirements of the Whenuapai and Hobsonville airports and the need to balance these against the benefits of further urban development in this area.
Another key issue identified in the ARPS relates to regionally significant physical resources, including infrastructure (Issue 2.3.4). Regional infrastructure includes airports and airport flight paths and defence establishment (e.g. AIAL and Base Auckland). The issue can be broken down into the following points:

The Council acknowledges that:

- Regionally significant physical resources, including infrastructure are essential for the community’s social and economic wellbeing; and
- The location, development and redevelopment of infrastructure is of strategic importance in its effects on the form and growth of the region.

However, it is recognised that:

- The long-term viability of regionally significant infrastructure and physical resources can be compromised by the adverse effects, including cumulative effects, of other activities; and
- These regionally significant resources can equally give rise to adverse effects, including cumulative effects on the environment, and on communities;
- Therefore, regionally significant resources can be adversely affected by conflicts if sensitive uses are allowed to develop near them or if they are inappropriately located.

3.4.2 Strategic Direction

The Strategic Direction aims to ensure the Region has the capacity to accommodate growth and development, and at the same time to protect the quality and efficient use of the natural and physical resources. The ARPS contains policies on the extent of the metropolitan urban limits and on urban growth management.

(a) Growth Management

Historically Auckland’s growth has mainly taken the form of urban expansion. This has been managed through containment of metropolitan urban development within defined limits, and the orderly sequencing of development within those limits. Infilling within the urban area and intensification of urban development have played a part, though a lesser one.

Options for simple, relatively low cost, urban expansion of metropolitan Auckland are limited. Servicing and natural resource constraints limit the contribution to be made by suburban intensification, and the role of central city housing, though increasing, is relatively small in the overall housing supply. Consideration of these factors indicates that the stock of development opportunities within presently defined Metropolitan Urban Limits is sufficient for 15 – 20 years.

(b) Urban Containment

Policy 2.6.1 provides for the containment of urban development within the metropolitan limits (MUL) and set the limits to rural and coastal settlements. These limits have been
defined to minimise the adverse effects of urban development on regionally significant resources, including:

- Areas of high amenity value;
- Natural heritage and cultural heritage features and areas;
- Prime land;
- Vulnerable ecosystems;
- Areas where the quality of the environment is already degraded and requires improvement;
- Areas prone to the impact of natural hazards such as flooding or land instability, and areas which if urbanised are likely to induce flooding or instability elsewhere;
- Strategic infrastructural facilities such as airports/airfields.

The definition of the MUL also takes account of:

- Historical commitments to urbanise certain areas such as east Tamaki in the south, and Albany and Greenhithe in the north;
- The amount of land available for peripheral expansion having regard to the strategic direction of urban containment and intensification. Currently, this represents capacity for 15 to 20 years’ urban growth;
- The need to promote efficient use of existing urban infrastructure and where necessary to enable the provision of new infrastructure;
- The incompatibility of urban uses with activities such as airports, intensive horticulture or activities such as airports, intensive horticulture or activities storing or processing hazardous substances.

(c) Urban Intensification

The ARPS outlines that, more intensive forms of development should not be limited to infill development. Peripheral land development also offers opportunities for a wider range of subdivisional forms, housing types and densities than have historically been attempted in greenfields situations in Auckland. Achieving higher densities of development on undeveloped urban land will mean that the current reservoir of urban land will be able to accommodate the Region’s growth for a longer period of time.

The Strategic Direction supports intensification, including infill development within the urban area so that better utilisation is encouraged of the substantial reservoir of under-utilised land within the urban area. Intensification can enable more efficient use of physical resources including infrastructure and also shift the emphasis of development of metropolitan Auckland toward an urban form, which is more efficient in transport and energy forms.
(d) **Countryside Living**

Historically, complex and liberal provisions in district plans for control of the subdivision of rural land have provided in an unplanned manner for the desire of urban Aucklanders to live in rural areas. This largely urban generated use has had a range of adverse effects on the Region’s environment. The adverse effects of subdividing rural land into small lots, can include the following:

i. Reduced versatility of potential use of rural land and mineral resources;

ii. Compromised natural resource values (native vegetation, habitat, and water quality), cultural heritage values, rural landscape and amenity values, and a change to the character of rural areas

iii. Increased demands arising in some areas for the provision of urban-type services, which are costly and inefficient to provide at rural-residential densities.

These effects are inconsistent with the objectives of the ARPS, which aim to bring about the sustainable management of the Region’s urban and rural lands.

(e) **Rural Areas**

The Strategic Direction of the ARPS is dependent on the ability to manage growth and control adverse effects. This results in the separation of urban and rural areas, and is primarily achieved through the definition of urban limits and management of activities, including subdivision, in rural areas. This is designed to avoid any adverse effects of urban Auckland on areas outside the metropolitan area, protect the Region’s natural resources from significant adverse effects of urban development, retain options for future use of resources and to improve the efficiency of urban Auckland by encouraging development at locations that will promote cost-effective servicing by transportation systems, utility network systems and other works and services.

### 3.5 **Waitakere City Proposed District Plan 1995**

*(As amended by Council decisions and appeals resolved up to May 10, 2002)*

Waitakere City Council publicly notified the Proposed District Plan in October 1995. Hearings have been held and decisions issued by the Council in respect of submissions and further submissions lodged. A total of 155 references were lodged with the Environment Court against the Council’s decisions. The 11 March 2003 Agenda (Report 8) of the WCC Environmental Management Committee, states that there are now 28 appeals remaining on the District Plan. On 17 February 2003, the Environment Court issued a consent order allowing Council to approve the whole plan, not affected by references (appeals) or outstanding variations. The officer’s report proposed that Council set (and publicly notify) 27 March 2003 as the date on which the Plan would be made operative.

This date is not yet confirmed. However, as it is expected that the Plan will be made operative in the immediate future, no assessment has been made of the Transitional District
Plan in this report. All references in this report to ‘District Plan policies’ or ‘District Plan rules’ are from the Proposed District Plan.

3.5.1 Summary

The Waitakere City Proposed District Plan currently identifies the Whenuapai Airbase with a defence purposes airfield designation along with housing designations on Ngahue Rd, Kowhai Rd, and Kauri Rd, and a sewerage treatment designation on the plant adjacent to Totara Rd. Should the airbase be utilised for any other purpose outside what the designation provides, the performance standards which apply to the underlying Countryside Environment(zoning) would become relevant. These provisions essentially provide for rural uses (including rural-residential) with some provision for non-residential uses as a discretionary activity. These provisions would not provide for the ongoing use of the airfield as a civilian airport, as a permitted activity.

Subdivision is provided for at a density of 4.0ha per site with provision for structure planning that may reduce this density. WCC have put on hold all structure planning in the vicinity of the airbase pending further strategic assessment of the Whenuapai Airbase land and the completion of the Upper Waitemata Harbour Study.

3.5.2 Introduction

The District Plan is formulated on the basis of two management layers:

- Management of the effects of people’s activities on the natural environment is carried out through rules based on “Natural Areas”; and
- Management of the effects of people’s activities on other people, and the sustainable management of the built environment, is carried out through rules based on “Human Environments”.

The Plan is an effects-based plan in that it does not generally identify classes of activities. The major activity distinction made in the Plan is between “residential activities” and “non-residential activities”. Most rules in the Plan relates to “any activity”.

The Whenuapai Airbase has an underlying ‘zoning’ of Countryside Environment, and is located within a ‘General’ natural area.

The surrounding sites are also zoned ‘Countryside’ and are within a ‘General’ natural area, with the exception of the coastal areas. The surrounding area is interspersed with Rural Village Human Environments (e.g. out towards Onetaipu Point). Two sectors of this zoned land are designated for Defence purposes.

To the South East of the Airbase, below Hobsonville Road (SH18), land uses are zoned Living Human Environment. Almost immediately outside the defence designation there are ‘special soils’ areas.
3.5.3 District Plan Policy

It is assumed that the NZDF would dispose of site as a whole and therefore our policy analysis has been limited only broad strategic directions and the more detailed policies and rules relating to how a new land use development/subdivision would need to be set out, have not been included.

The Proposed District Plan defines the landscape character of the Countryside Human Environment as having a “dominant pastoral ‘image’” and “quiet (except around airbase and SH16).”

Airport activities

The policies of the Proposed District Plan (10.15, 10.21, 10.24 and 10.25) seek to:

- Avoid settlement within those parts of the City where existing noise levels exceed that compatible with human health;
- Ensure that there is no impediment (structures, trees and lighting) to the safe operation of aircraft using the airbases;
- Manage activities in the area surrounding Base Auckland in a way that ensures that emissions of odour, dust, electromagnetic radiation and bird aggregation do not cause a hazard to aircraft. Where activities cannot avoid creating such effects, they must be located at a sufficient distance from Base Auckland; and
- Avoid the adverse effects of aircraft noise from Base Auckland on people’s health and safety by limiting the location of noise sensitive activities (residential, hospitals, educational institutions and rest homes).

The policies recognises that possible design solutions (screening, acoustic insulation) may remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of aircraft noise. While these policies with the exception of 10.15 relate specifically to Base Auckland, it is considered that they signal the approach that the Council would take to any civilian airfield. The methods stated which will be used to carry out these policies are:

- Subdivision Rules
- Rules controlling activities, which are sensitive to aircraft noise in identified areas.
- Rules specifying the need for acoustic insulation for activities, which are sensitive to aircraft noise in identified areas.
- Height Rules
- Air Discharges, Odour, Dust, Glare and Vibration Rules.

Non-residential activities

Policies 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, and 10.10 seek to avoid the adverse nuisance effects and effects on the health of peoples in surrounding properties of discharges to air, noise, artificial lighting and vibration, which are created by non-residential activities.
The methods stated, which will be used to carry out these policies, include:

- Non-Residential Activities Rules
- Human Environment Rules rules requiring separation distances
- General noise standards.
- Air Discharges, Odour, Dust, Glare and Vibration Rules.
- Signs Rules

Policies 11.10 and 11.13 seek to ensure that non-residential activities are carried out in a way that maintains the amenity values of the environment that they are in and the surrounding environments. The methods stated, which will be used to carry out these policies include the Non-Residential Activity Rules and the General Noise Standards.

Policies 10.8, 10.9, 10.17 and 11.30 seek to ensure that non-residential activities, which seek to locate in the non-urban areas of the city do not lead to incremental urban growth or result in adverse effects on rural character and amenity values. These policies also seek to ensure that land use and subdivision provides for a level of infrastructure (transport, stormwater, water supply, wastewater and solid waste) that ensures that adverse effects on public health and the environment are avoided.

The methods stated, which will be used to carry out these policies, include:

- Subdivision Rules
- General Noise Standards
- Traffic Generation Rules.
- Residential Activities/ Density Rules
- Infrastructure Rules

### 3.5.4 Current Designation

The RNZAF Base Auckland – including the Whenuapai Air Base is currently designated for “Defence Purposes – RNZAF air bases and associated defence activities”.

The designation is identified on the Human Environments Map in the Maps Section of the Plan by the reference number “MD1”. The designation contains specific conditions, which are included in the Designations Appendix of the Plan. The specific conditions relate to the following areas:

- Other matters, which are required to be addressed in any outline plan for works on the Base (including bulk/location, finished contours, traffic and landscaping);
- The requirement for erosion and sediment control measures to be employed for any earthworks on the Base;
- Noise standards; and
The requirement for a heritage management plan to be submitted with any outline plan for works involving any scheduled heritage building on the site.

The specific conditions of the designation require activities on the RNZAF Airbase are required to meet the following noise standards:

(a) Aircraft operations not exceeding a Day/Night (Ldn) level of:
   - 65dBA outside the Airnoise Boundary (Ldn 55 dBA Contour) shown on the Airbase Noise map, and;
   - 55dBA outside the Outer Control Boundary (Ldn 55 dBA Contour) shown on the Airbase Noise map.

For the purpose of this control noise will be measured in accordance with the NZS 6805:1992 and calculated, as stated in NZS 6805:1992 using FAA Integrated Noise Model (INM) and records of actual aircraft operations and calculated as a 90 day rolling logarithmic average.

(b) Aircraft operations exceeding the standard in (a) above where:
   - the aircraft is landing in an emergency;
   - the aircraft is landing at the Airbase as an alternative in adverse weather conditions; or
   - the aircraft is using the airfield as part of a search and rescue operation or civil emergency.

The Noise Control Area is shown on the plan in Appendix III to the District Plan Maps.

The Designations Appendix also contains special restrictions relating to approach paths to Whenuapai Airfield, which accompany the designation. These “Protection Measures” provide airspace protection for aircraft on approach/takeoff or circling.

The protection measures require Ministry of Defence approval, for any building, change of use of a building/land or subdivision of land directly beneath or within the boundaries of the approach surfaces to the Whenuapai Airfield. These measures also restrict the height of buildings, structures and trees beneath the approach surfaces. The land surrounding the Base, which is affected by the restrictions is shown on the plans in Appendix II to the District Plan Maps.

3.5.5 Countryside Environment Rules

Most of the Countryside Environment Rules apply to “Any Activity” which may be proposed, although some rules apply only to “Residential Activities”, or only to “Rural Activities”, or only to “Non-Residential Activities”.

The rules applying to non-residential activities provide for “Home Occupations” as a permitted activity; “Filming Activities” as a controlled activity; and activities in an existing
building where there are no retail sales are a limited discretionary activity. Any other non-residential activities are provided for as a discretionary activity.

Activities in the Countryside Environment are also required to meet performance standards relating to such things as building height, location, density, building coverage and design, traffic, car parking and service standards and infrastructure requirements.

3.5.6 City-Wide Rules

The City-Wide Rules section includes rules on information for resource consent, natural hazards, financial contributions, hazardous facilities and contaminated sites, heritage, Prohibited Activities and Temporary Activities.

(a) Prohibited Activities

The Prohibited Activity Rules include a rule, which prohibits the location of any new dwelling, school, or hospital within the $L_{dn}$ 65dBA Noise Contour as shown on the ‘RNZAF Base – Noise control area’ map in the Maps Section.

(b) General Noise Standards

The General Noise Standards include rules relating to Helicopter Landing Areas, Airbase Noise Insulation and Airbase Noise Management.

The Helicopter Landing Area rules apply to all helicopter operations, except for those associated with Waitakere Hospital and those conducted by the RNZAF during times of civil emergency or threat to national security or associated with training for the carrying out of those activities.

The Airbase Noise Insulation rules, require dwellings, schools and hospitals within the $L_{dn}$ 55dBA Noise Contours as shown on the RNZAF Base – Noise Control Area Map, to have acoustic insulation to ensure that the internal noise level does not exceed $L_{dn}$ 40dBA.

The Airbase Noise Management rules require aircraft operations on the RNZAF Airbase not to exceed a noise level of 65dBA outside the Airnoise Boundary and 55dBA outside the Outer Control Boundary.

(c) Heritage

There are two scheduled heritage sites/buildings on the Whenuapai Air Base, which are recorded in the District Plan as follows:

1797: Bristol Block (Tainui St) - 1930s Art-deco barracks buildings - Category III. Significance attributed to historical & architectural values.

1798: Officers’ Mess, (Kupe Ave) - 1930s Art-deco building - Category III. Significance attributed to historical & architectural values.

Alterations, additions to and the Demolition of heritage buildings and sites require a resource consent under the District Plan rules.
3.5.7 **Natural Area Rules**

The “Natural Areas” in relation to Whenuapai are as follows:

- “Special soils” areas to the west of Tainui Crescent, Manaia and Takitimu Streets, and Tamatea Avenue and in the block bound by Kowhai, Puriri and Kauri Roads.
- “Riparian margins” of 10m wide from the Totara Road boundary to approximately 500m into Whenuapai and Rara Creek.
- “Riparian margins” of 5m wide from approximately 100m into Whenuapai to the north by Karaka Road and in the block bound by Kowhai, Puriri and Kauri Roads.

The riparian margin areas are considered by the Waitakere City Council to play a significant role in the maintenance and enhancement of water quality, particularly when vegetated. The identification of special soil areas is a managed approach to ensure a level of protection consistent with maintaining the availability, where possible, of the land for future use.

The Natural Areas Rules cover vegetation alteration, earthworks, impermeable surfaces, and establishment of vegetation, stock grazing and forestry.

3.5.8 **Subdivision Rules**

The Subdivision Rules cover all standards relating to the subdivision of land in the City including those standards, which specifically ally to the Countryside Environment.

(a) **Countryside Environment**

In the Countryside Environment, the minimum site area for each proposed site, except within the Ldn 65 noise contour shown on the Airbase Noise Map is 4 hectares.

Any subdivision of the Base, would require a structure plan to be completed to ensure any development is consistent with the RMA 1991 and the Auckland Regional Policy Statement. The aim of the structure plan would be to provide for subdivision and development, while protecting:

- the character of the area
- the beauty of the landscape
- native bush
- streams and the quality of water they contain
- heritage sites, buildings and trees

and to:

- avoid increasing flooding risk; and
- contain the spread of the urban area within certain boundaries.
(b) Proposed Variation 90 - Waiarohia Structure Plan (on-hold)

This structure plan if approved, would allow subdivision (except within the Ldn 65 noise contour shown on the Airbase Noise Map) down to not less than 1 hectare where two or more adjoining sites are involved.

3.6 Regional Plans

3.6.1 Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air Land & Water

The Auckland Regional Council publicly notified the Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water in October 2001. Submissions closed on Friday 3 May 2002. This was after the Basing Study was prepared in September 2001.

The Plan applies to the management of air, land and water resources in the region including: Air, soil, rivers and streams, lakes, groundwater, wetlands and geothermal water.

The Plan deals with discharges to air, and discharges or contaminants into water, or onto/into land. The Plan addresses activities such as:

- Stormwater disposal; and
- Sewage treatment and disposal.

3.6.2 Air discharges

Resource consent for the discharge of contaminants to air may be required for a civilian activity involving discharges from equipment such as incinerators or boilers.

3.6.3 Stormwater Treatment

Stormwater treatment and discharge will require consent under the Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water 2001.

3.6.4 Sewage Treatment

The discharge of industrial wastewater, sewage or sewage effluent will require consent under the Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water 2001.
4 Issues/ Constraints/ Opportunities

The purpose of this section is to identify the key issues that affect the future use of the Whenuapai Air Base. There are a number of issues at a general level covering both local and regional planning issues, and a number of issues specific to each of the three scenarios outlined earlier. In particular, this section discusses the potential positive and adverse environmental effects in detail in context of the planning framework.

4.1 Existing Resource Management Issues

The main resource management issues affecting the current NZDF operations at the Air Base, at local and regional level, are described below.

4.1.1 Urban Intensification

Urban intensification, in the rural areas surrounding the Base, in particular further residential development, would be expected to result in requests for additional operational restrictions due to the conflict between the effects generated by the aircraft operations at the Base and the levels of amenity expected by residents.

One of the functions of the Auckland Regional Council’s Metropolitan Urban Limits Strategy (MUL) is to provide for the protection of regionally significant infrastructure such as the Airbase. The MUL currently provides protection for the Base from substantial residential development in the surrounding areas as it restricts urban development to south of Hobsonville Road (current SH18).

However, the level of urban development in the areas surrounding the Base is expected to increase due to the following factors:

- The proposed realignments of State Highways 18 and 16, which will improve access from the North Shore and Auckland City and State Highway 1.
- The ARC is expected to move the MUL north to realign it with the new motorway (SH 18) designation.
- Waitakere City Council has already started the planning and consultation process for the areas opened up by the motorway development and the realignment of the MUL, known as the Massey North-Hobsonville Corridor.
- The re-development of the Hobsonville Air Base
- Recent hearings of non-complying activity subdivisions have indicated a willingness of Waitakere City Council to approve greenfields subdivisions, based on Structure Plans down to a minimum density of 1 hectare. A Council initiated structure plan for the Waiarohia catchment has been notified. This structure plan includes a large part of the Whenuapai Air Base and provides for subdivision down to 1 hectare within the Air Base Outer Control Noise Boundary.
Further planning in the Massey North – Hobsonville corridor and the Waiarohia Structure Plan have been put on hold until the future status of the Whenuapai Air Base is known. However, it is considered that while the requirements of the Air Base will be taken into account in planning for future uses in the surrounding area, that growth pressures in the Auckland Region, will result in the “rural buffer” that the Air Base currently has, being reduced to a minimum.

4.1.2 Stormwater Disposal

The Upper Waitemata Harbour is a slow flushing tidal estuary. The quality of water is affected by land use within the contributing catchments. The Upper Harbour is a particularly sensitive environment, due in the main to its narrowness, reduced water exchange (compared with the lower Harbour), and proximity to residential areas. It is also a heavily used recreational area and has significant ecological values.

If major works were undertaken on runway 03/21 and the hardstanding areas, it is likely that the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) would require sediment treatment ponds (or alternative measures), to achieve long term/ on going stormwater treatment from run-off from hardstanding and runway surfaces.

Protection of the Upper Harbour could be a major constraint on future development at Whenuapai. All development in the area is subject to the findings of the Upper Waitemata Harbour Study. This may identify a sustainable ‘capacity’ of urban development in the upper harbour catchments, and effectively limit the potential of the site due to the potential for significant adverse ecological impacts on the Waitemata Harbour.

4.2 General Issues

There are a number of general issues and constraints that need to be considered in evaluating the opportunities for future use of the Air Base. These are:

4.2.1 Issue 1: The location of the site in a rural area, but surrounded by growing urban suburbs poses a number of significant management issues.

The Whenuapai air base is a significant area of land in the context of growth options in the western part of urban Auckland. Therefore, any option for the future of the base, either as an airport or for other future urban uses, will have an impact on the metropolitan urban limits and the form of the urban area if they are pursued.

The policy framework, and in particularly the Metropolitan Urban Limit, is likely to create significant difficulties for the establishment of ‘urban’ non-airport activities on the site. While there is precedent for airports to locate outside the MUL, other activities would have greater difficulty.
4.2.2 **Issue 2: Inadequate flexibility in the District Plan zoning to allow large range of uses.**

The Waitakere District Plan must be “not inconsistent with” the regional policy statement. Therefore, the Air Base site and surrounding area is zoned for rural activities, particular rural residential in the “Countryside” zone. This does not permit the full spectrum of ancillary commercial activities that might be expected to develop around an airport, or alternatively, those activities that prospective purchasers may wish to establish, which are non-airport related. Should NZDF remove its existing designation there would no longer be provision for the ongoing operation of an airport under the District Plan. In light of the location of the site and various other environmental, planning and infrastructure factors, the zoning is, in broad terms, appropriate and would be difficult to change.

4.2.3 **Issue 3: Airport operations impact on land use through Noise protection for surrounding properties.**

The District Plan currently includes noise contours based on the predicted requirements of the RNZAF at the time the District Plan was prepared, up until 2010. These noise contours may be different for joint military/commercial or a wholly commercial operation. The imposition of further noise contours on surrounding properties (and subsequent impacts on the ability to subdivide and develop, or provide insulation) through the District Plan will create an adverse effect in terms of restricting development potential and a loss of property “value” in the broadest sense. It is also possible that the location of existing development in relation to any ‘new’ noise contours will make the justification of any future changes to the District Plan difficult, both technically and politically. Noise is clearly the most significant issue at a general level in environmental terms.

4.2.4 **Issue 4: Degree of public support for future activities**

Under any future scenario, whether airport related or otherwise, public consultation for any changes required to the planning framework is likely to be a major factor. In addition to political support, the process to achieve the necessary permissions outlined later in this report (whether through resource consents, District Plan changes, designations or other means) will require consultation. Given the various issues of noise, it is anticipated that strong local opposition is likely. Whether this is countered by sub-regional or regional support for an airport (or other activities) on this site cannot be determined at this time. However, in either event, public support or opposition is likely to translate into participation in the planning submissions and appeals process. While this is a positive aspect of the process established by the RMA, it is likely that a great deal of time will need to be invested in consultation to attempt to understand and where possible resolve these issues (which are likely to revolve around the preceding three issues).
4.2.5 Issue 5: Development in the Upper Waitemata Harbour may cause environmental concerns.

In addition to the most significant effect of noise, there is potential for ‘generic’ environmental impacts. Potential effects are identified in the following section, however a key factor is the Upper Harbour Study currently being coordinated by the ARC. Amongst other matters, the ability of the upper Waitemata Harbour to deal with sediment and stormwater laden with urban contaminants has been a significant concern for a number of years. While issues associated with the development of the site are likely to be able to be mitigated, there is a broader issue of constraining the amount and type of development in the catchments of the upper harbour at a cumulative level. This potential constraint is unknown at this time.

4.3 Scenario One and Scenario Two: Civilian Airport Use

The resource management issues/ constraints/ opportunities to establishing a combined military/ civilian airport and a “stand-alone” civilian airport are discussed below.

4.3.1 Potential Effects

The potential effects that would likely cause concern in respect of Resource Management Act matters would include the following:

(a) Urban Intensification in the Surrounding Area

As set out in paragraph 4.1.1 of this report, the level of urban development in the areas surrounding the Base is expected to increase in the medium to long term (5-20 year period). Continued subdivision of surrounding land, and the area within the noise contours would have implications in respect of the long-term ability to function as an airport (i.e. reverse sensitivity).

It is recognised that even scenario 1 is likely to be a “transitional option” for the NZDF and that all or the majority of military operations will be withdrawn from Whenuapai within the short to medium term (0-10 years). While urban development in the surrounding areas is not expected to significantly increase during the short term, it is considered that planning for the use of Whenuapai for a combined military/ civilian airport and/ or a “stand-alone” airport should begin immediately.

WCC has put the relevant planning processes for the land surrounding the area on-hold until the future of Whenuapai Air Base is made. Any decision by the NZDF to:

- delay making a decision on the future of Whenuapai;
- leave decisions on the type of civilian airport use to a future operator; or
- not participate in the planning process being undertaken by the ARC and WCC;
may see these planning processes resumed and decisions made which preclude expansion of civilian airport activities at the Air Base and limit land disposal options for Defence.

In making its decision\(^{15}\) to put the Hobsonville-Massey North corridor planning on hold the Council indicated that, if the Air Base were converted to a civilian airport, areas in the noise control area would be unsuitable for housing. However such areas were noted as suitable for employment activities. Council also noted that there are large, flat areas around the Air Base, which are well positioned between the two new motorways and therefore more suitable for employment activities than most areas within the Hobsonville-Massey North Corridor. This may indicate that, should the Air Base be re-developed for a ‘stand alone’ civilian airport, the Council would consider the development of areas adjacent to the airport for supporting or related uses, (e.g. service industries) at the expense of areas already identified in the RGS.

(b) **Noise**

Further investigation into the type and scale of civilian airport operations proposed for Whenuapai would be required in order to determine whether the proposed operation can be undertaken within the existing noise boundaries. Given military flights are currently well ‘inside’ the noise contours, even an increase in activity ‘up to’ the noise contour level will result in a ‘perceived’ noise increase.

Depending on the nature of any future civilian airport use, long-term planning for airport protection would need further investigation, particularly in respect of the number of flights permitted by existing noise contours. Any prospective need to expand noise contours would have long term planning implications, as areas of North Shore City and Waitakere City would need to add ‘protective’ land use measures. The feasibility of this is unknown without specific modelling. There is however potential for this to be perceived as a negative impact on ‘land use’ of any properties which are impacted by any ‘restrictions on use’ as a result of modified noise contours.

(c) **Traffic Generation**

Depending on the nature of the civilian operation at Whenuapai, there may be increased traffic generation, although it could be assumed that planned and existing transport linkages, including upgrades of SH 16 and 18, would be sufficient to support this option. However, any increase in traffic generation may result in impacts on the local road network. Should a proposal that provides for future civilian aviation and support facilities be adopted at Whenuapai there may be some implications, for traffic flows, on local roads servicing the airfields – specifically Trig and Brigham Creek Roads.

(d) **Regional Transport Network**

Potential for positive impacts on the regional transport network needs to be investigated in respect of the possible effects of reassigning some Auckland International Airport traffic to Whenuapai. This would need to be weighed against regional ‘costs’ from duplication of significant regional infrastructure.

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15 Waitakere City Council - City Development Committee Agenda, 6 March 2003
In addition, the MUL currently protect the Auckland International Airport, as ancillary airport activities are able to locate in the surrounding area. Retail and other trade effects on local centres related to ancillary activities (e.g. retail, service industries) may result. This is likely to be a particular concern where the commercial feasibility/ viability of the airport relies on significant ancillary activities.

(e) Visual and Landscape

In the Auckland Regional Landscape Assessment (1984), the Whenuapai landscape unit rated 3 for landscape Quality and 1 for Sensitivity. One of the contributions made by the airfield is the view that the public gain into it.

Development of new areas of base has potential to have adverse effects on rural character and landscape values. While some of these issues can be mitigated through appropriate design, the impact is likely to be negative if not managed.

(f) Runway Length

It is anticipated, that in the long-term a civilian operator would need to extend the length of the runway. The eventual extension of the runway will have implications for land acquisition and the status of the existing designation.

(g) Utility Infrastructure

Stormwater and sediment controls would need to be implemented across the base, including treatment of the runway and any redevelopment areas. A range of techniques is available to improve the quality of stormwater runoff coming from the site. Wider issues associated with development in the sub-catchments draining to the upper harbour are also likely to factor into any consideration of stormwater effects.

4.3.2 Limitations of the Existing Defence Designation

Further consideration should be given to whether a civilian airport component could be established under the existing defence designation.

Based on case law, it is considered that the scope of the designation would be defined by what a reasonable member of the public (reading the District Plan), would take from the description of the designation and accompanying conditions and special restrictions.

A review of the wording of the designation in the District Plan and the conditions and special restrictions attached to the designation clearly indicates that the designation provides for the RNZAF airbase and associated defence activities, rather than general airport activities. However, the wording of the designation is extremely broad as to encompass any activity contemplated by the NZDF. This may arguably include an element of commercial or civilian operations as long as these would be accommodated within the “envelope” of the designation conditions.

The Land Management Plan (1994) indicates that a noise analysis study was undertaken in order to establish the noise boundaries (L_{dn} 65 and 55) applicable to aircraft movements at
Whenuapai, up to the year 2010. In addition, to a small growth in airforce operations, the modelling undertaken included an allowance for commercial jet aircraft in consideration for the potential for civilian aviation use of Whenuapai. It is understood that the results of this study, formed the basis of the “Noise Control Area” and conditions of the designation for Whenuapai that were included in the Proposed District Plan.

While, the wording of the designation in the District Plan appears to be specific to “Defence Purposes”, it is considered worth investigating what background information describing the future use of the Base (such as the noise boundaries), was provided to the Council at the time of the drafting of the District Plan. The description of the proposed Plan’s designation may have included the provision for some civilian aviation use of the Base.

Therefore, it is considered that the present designation would not likely provide for the establishment of a ‘stand alone’ civilian airport at Whenuapai. However, it is worth investigating whether a civilian component to existing airbase operations, could be established under the existing defence designation.

### 4.3.3 Options for Consenting the Civilian Airport Operation Under the RMA 1991

Subject to the discussion in paragraph 4.3.2 above, it is considered that:

- The continuation of NZDF airbase operations at Whenuapai would be provided for under the existing designation;
- A ‘stand along’ civilian airport would not be covered by the existing designation and would not be a permitted activity under the underlying zoning.

In order to undertake /operate a joint military/ civilian airport at Whenuapai, consent under the RMA 1991 would need to be obtained for the civilian component. The options for achieving this are:

- An alteration to the existing designation (notified or non-notified)
- A new designation (notified)
- A resource consent (notified or non-notified).
- A Plan Change to establish an ‘airport zone’.

### (a) All Options

In order to decide, which is the best option for a civilian airport operator to pursue, it would be important to establish the “permitted baseline” of existing Defence activities.

This would require a detailed assessment of the nature of existing activities occurring on the Base as well as those activities that NZDF can undertake on the Base under the existing designation if it chooses. This assessment would need to include adverse effects from
aircraft in the air (noise contours, protection of approach paths) as well as effects from on-the-ground activities (hours operation, traffic generation etc).

The next step would be to determine whether the level of adverse effects generated by the air base, would be broadly equivalent or greater than those effects, which would be created by a joint military/civilian airport or “stand-alone” civilian airport operation.

(b) Alteration to the designation

The NZDF could apply for an alteration to the existing designation under s181 of the RMA 1991. If it can be determined that the level of adverse effects generated by a joint military/civilian operation, would be similar to the permitted baseline level, it may be possible to pursue a non-notified alteration to the designation.

Ultimately though, reliance on the existing designation to establish civilian aviation operations depends upon making a change in the character to the designation itself, from defence purposes to general airport purposes. This needs further investigation. If the existing designation could not be altered sufficiently to provide for civilian operations, a new designation could be applied for.

(c) New Designation

The NZDF and/or another requiring authority (network utility operator or local authority) could apply for a new designation under s 168 of the RMA 1991, to provide for general airport purposes. A notice of requirement for a new designation would be publicly notified.

Waitakere City Council is likely to recommend, at a minimum, that conditions similar to those applying to the current designation, (e.g. noise boundaries, flight path restrictions) be attached to any designation for a civilian airport.

(d) Transfer of the Designation

Section 180 of the RMA allows for the transfer of the rights and responsibilities of a designation to another requiring authority. Where the financial responsibility for a project, work or network utility operation is transferred from one requiring authority to another (another network utility operator or a local authority), responsibility for any relevant designation is also transferred.

Further investigation could be undertaken as to whether another requiring authority could take responsibility for the Whenuapai designation. The new requiring authority would need to remain operating under Defence auspices/ operational control to take advantage of the defence purposes designation, which is relatively constraining. The main benefit in transferring the designation would be to ensure that once RNZAF ceases operations the designation does not lapse and remains in place as a permitted baseline.

(e) Resource Consent

A resource consent could be applied for, to establish civilian airport, e.g. in the southern corner of the airfield and from the existing runways. Subject to a review of the detail of
these operations, it is considered that such operations would be classified a discretionary activity under the provisions of the Waitakere District Plan.

If it can be determined that the level of adverse effects generated by a combined civilian/military operation would be similar to that generated by the existing military operation, it may be possible for a potential operator to pursue a non-notified resource consent application.

The assessment undertaken to determine the existing level of effects would need to be very thorough, as any non-notified consent process to establish a civil airport at Whenuapai, is likely to be subject to judicial review proceedings from key stakeholders (adjacent residents, NSCC, competing interests such as Auckland International Airport Ltd or Air NZ). The test for non-notification of a resource consent, under s94 of the RMA 1991, is difficult to meet, and Councils and the Court are increasingly erring in favour of notification if there is any doubt over potentially affected parties.

If this option was pursued, the timing of NZDF’s withdrawal from Whenuapai would need to be considered. The military operations would need to be scaled down at the same time and level as civilian operations were being implemented, so that the total level of effects generated remained the same as the existing military operation (similar overall noise levels).

(f) An ‘Airport’ Zoning

A potential operator(s) could apply for a plan change (under s73 and First Schedule of the RMA) to change the zoning of the Whenuapai site from ‘Countryside Environment’ to an ‘Airport’ zone, once the District Plan is made operative. This Plan Change could be initiated by the Council (WCC) or by a private operator(s).

The ‘Airport’ zone could provide for civilian air traffic as well as a range of ancillary and related uses. The Waitakere District Plan does not contain ‘activity lists’, the status of an activity is determined by whether it complies with the rules (performance standards) in the Plan, e.g. noise, traffic generation and infrastructure. Most of the rules apply to ‘any activity’, but some rules apply to particular broad classes of activity, e.g. ‘residential activities’ or ‘rural activities’. It is considered that any new ‘Airport’ zone, would need to follow a similar format.

(g) Conclusion

The best planning tools for providing for civilian airport use on the Whenuapai site will depend on how much continuing involvement Defence want to have with the site, whether there are currently any operators willing to pursue consents and whether those operators individually or collectively are able to achieve requiring authority status.

Permitted Baseline

It is considered that it is worth investigating whether the existing designation creates a permitted baseline level of effects, which would allow for a feasible and viable level of civil
aviation operations and if it does, whether that baseline would facilitate an alteration to the designation or a resource consent application, proceeding on a non-notified basis.

Even if a civilian airport operation represents an expansion over the existing military activities, a detailed evaluation of the permitted baseline level of effects is still strongly recommended. This is because in assessing any new designation or resource consent application for a civilian airport operation, the proposed level of effects generated by the proposal would be compared to the permitted base line level.

It is considered that any decision to ‘re-introduce’ civilian aircraft following the cessation of military flights from Whenuapai would, in our opinion, be more difficult from both a planning and community perspective than if there was a ‘gradual’ transition of uses within existing operational constraints imposed under the RMA.

Resource Consent vs. Plan Change

It is considered that the option of applying for a resource consent to permit civilian airport activity on the site would only be suitable for transitional options which involve establishing a low level of aircraft activity on the site, or to establishing combined military/civilian operations. It is not considered to be the most efficient or effective consenting process for establishing, for example a new regional airport on the site.

The Court has indicated that where it is clear, having regard to the scale of the proposed activity and location of the site, that there is potential for significant effects on the locality in general (and therefore the existing provisions of the district plan) from the granting of a resource consent, a plan change initiated by either the Council of the applicants is the most appropriate course to take.

Designation vs. Plan Change

There are both advantages and disadvantages to the use of a designation or a Plan Change to establish a new zoning on the site that would permit civilian airport activities.

The advantages of a designation are that ultimately the ‘decision-making power’ resides with the requiring authority. Any activity is permitted on the site if it is in accordance with the designation and accompanying conditions. The scope of the designation is defined by what any reasonable person would take from reading the designation in the District Plan. A designation for an ‘airport’ would generally allow for a broad range of airport activities to be undertaken on the site and provide flexibility for them to change over time. While a requiring authority may still submit an outline plan for any works undertaken on the site to Council (who may request changes), this process does not provide an opportunity for further public submissions.

Therefore, a designation would provide a reasonable level of certainty for an airport operator. The designation also allows the requiring authority to acquire land under the Public Works Act. However, a designation may restrict the nature of non-airport activities, on or adjacent to the site, to those anticipated and assessed at the time of designation or

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16 Robinson v Ashburton DC W92/94 (PT), noted [1994] BRM Gazette 97
those that a reasonable person would expect the airport operator to undertake (and subject to any outline plan submitted).

Under an ‘airport’ zoning in the WCC Plan, it is likely that activities on the site would be permitted if they comply with the relevant rules in the Plan. These rules would be based on the level of effects generated, e.g. noise level, traffic generation. The status of the activity, (e.g. permitted, controlled, discretionary or non-complying activity), and the need for a resource consent would depend on whether the activity meets the relevant rules in terms of the level of effects it generates.

The advantages of the Plan Change process are that the ‘airport’ zoning could provide more flexibility for non-airport uses, not anticipated at the time of the Plan Change to establish in the future, as long as they comply with the rules in the Plan. It may also provide more comfort and certainty to the public, i.e. that activities will be scrutinized in terms of the rules in the Plan. This may result in less opposition to changing the use of the site from military to civilian airport. The public would have an input at the Plan Change stage as to what level of activity is permitted on the site. For any level of activity (over and above that permitted) the public would know that assessment, and possibly the opportunity for public participation, would occur at a later date through the resource consent process.

The disadvantages of an ‘airport’ zoning are that it provides less certainty for an operator as to what activities they can undertake. It may also result in less flexibility for an operator(s) to undertake new airport activities or expand in the future. In addition, resource consent applications for new or expanded level of activities may be publicly notified.

It is considered that obtaining a designation to permit the use of the site for civilian airport operations would be preferred from an operator perspective (where there is one operator or an airport company) as it provides more certainty. An airport zoning may be the preferred scenario in the situation where there is several operators, none with requiring authority status, or where there is no willing operator and the Council wants to promote airport uses on the site.

**Transitional Phase**

Even, if in the long term it is proposed to use the Whenuapai site as a civilian airport (scenario two), which generates a level of effects over and above the existing military operation, it is considered worth investigating a non-notified alteration to the designation possibly in conjunction with the transfer of the responsibility of the designation to another requiring authority (either the WCC or another airport operator). This alteration to the designation could provide for a level of civilian airport activity during a “transitional phase”.
4.3.4 Timeframe for Consenting a Combined Military/ Civilian Airport

Please note the following timeframes are indicative only and are subject to change depending on the particular circumstances that evolve under any scenario.

A realistic timeframe for obtaining consent for a civilian airport operation with very similar effects to the permitted base line level would be approximately six months. This assumes that a comprehensive assessment of the both the effects of the existing military operations and the proposed civilian component have already been undertaken. It is considered that this assessment would take approximately 6 months.

It is considered that the 6-month timeframe would provide for consultation with the WCC and the ARC and allow for the non-notified processing by the Council of either an alteration to the designation or a non-notified resource consent. This timeframe does not include the additional time required if a judicial review is undertaken of the non-notification decision.

A realistic timeframe for obtaining either a new designation or a resource consent application from lodgement is approximately 2 years. This includes the processing by the Council of a notified application. In addition, it is also likely that a notified application would be appealed. The timeframes involved with an Environment Court (EC) Hearing have also been factored in.

Prior to lodgement of any application, a period of at least 6 months should be allowed for an assessment of environment effects and public consultation to occur. Community consultation will be an important aspect to this process. There are likely to be two aspects to this process in broad terms: consultation associated with the likely cost of ‘establishing’ a regional airport at Whenuapai; and locally, the continued (and potentially increased) negative impact of noise on residents.

It is considered that a realistic timeframe for a Plan Change to the District Plan to be made operative would be approximately 2 and half years after the request is made by a private operator/ or the decision is made by Council to prepare a Plan Change. This is a publicly notified process, which involves submissions and a public hearing (and potential Environment Court appeal), similar to the resource consent and designation processes. However, it is considered that the timeframes involved with a privately initiated Plan Change would be longer, principally for the following reasons:

- For a request for Private Plan Change - the Council has 30 working days from when the request is received (or all further information is received) either to adopt, accept or reject the Plan Change. The Council is then required to publicly notify the Plan Change within four months of either agreeing to the Plan change or adopting it as a Council Plan Change. This provides time for the Plan Change to be prepared and for consultation to be undertaken.

- The Plan Change process involves two rounds of public submissions after notification - submissions and further submissions.
A local authority has specific consultation requirements, under Cl.3 of Schedule 1, with respect to a Plan Change they have initiated or adopted.

The decisions by a Council to proceed with a Plan Change or adopt a privately initiated Plan Change would normally be made by a Council Committee, which would meet only monthly, as opposed to decisions made on a resource consent, which in some cases are made under delegated authority, Council sub-committee or Commissioner.

Similar to a resource consent or designation application, it is considered that prior to a formal request for a Plan Change being made, a period of at least 6 months should be allowed for an assessment of environment effects and community consultation.

4.4 Scenario Three: Civilian “Other Use”

The resource management issues/constraints/opportunities to establishing a civilian non-airport use are discussed below.

4.4.1 Potential Effects

The potential effects that would likely cause concern in respect of Resource Management Act matters would include the following:

(a) Urban Intensification

A comprehensive redevelopment of the site for ‘Urban’ (non-airport) related uses would be difficult to achieve, as it would be inconsistent with a range of strategic objectives and policies in both Regional Policy Statement and Waitakere District Plan. It may lead to the pressure for urban expansion, which would be inconsistent with the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), and its focus on containing growth and encouraging intensification of existing urban areas (i.e. protecting those environments, which have not been comprised by urban development).

Broad political support at both regional and local level would therefore be required to achieve a zoning change. At the time of writing, based on the priorities currently expressed in the RGS and North and Western Sectors Agreement, a zoning change would, in our opinion, also be difficult to justify, particularly if that rezoning were to be effective in the short term. A deferred urban zoning may be appropriate, but would require reconsideration of the Regional Growth Strategy.

As set out in Section 4.4.1 of this report, in making its decision to put the planning processes associated with the Hobsonville-Massey North Corridor on hold, WCC indicated that there are large, flat areas around the Air Base, which are well positioned (between two state highways) and therefore more suitable for employment activities than most areas within the Corridor. This may indicate that, should the Airbase be available for urban development, the Council in order to achieve a better urban form, would consider the
development of areas of Whenuapai prior to areas already identified in the RGS, for employment activities.

(b) **Upper Waitemata Harbour**

Re-development of the Air Base at an ‘urban density’ has the potential to result in greater effects on the Upper Waitemata Harbour from sediment generation during the construction phase. In the long-term it will result in the potential for greater impacts from the discharge of stormwater run-off into the Harbour, due to an increase in the amount of paved surfaces. Subject to the results of the Upper Waitemata Harbour Study, it is considered that both these issues can be managed through good practice design at an early stage in the development design process.

(c) **Visual and Landscape**

The WCC District Plan describes the Whenuapai area and the Air Base as having a rural villages character, strong links with the coastal environment, and a strong sense of place. It is considered that any comprehensive development of the site at an ‘urban density’ has the potential to have adverse effects on landscape and amenity values of the area.

These effects could be avoided or mitigated through good urban design and careful consideration of the appropriate type and scale of development.

(d) **Contaminated Land**

It is understood that some (historic) contamination of land under the tarmac/hard stand area of the airfield has occurred, generally from leakages in the pumped fuel line and delivery hydrant system (and possibly the old fuel storage facility). In times of moderate to heavy rain groundwater levels rise and pick up this contamination (hydrocarbons). This then discharges into the main open drain. It is possible that, given the historic nature of the contamination, much of the environmental effect has already occurred and that a small residual contamination problem is all that remains. It is likely that some degree of remediation will be required in order to establish a non-airport use on the site. Remediation of contaminated land would be a positive effect.

4.4.2 **Options for Consenting a Civilian Non-Airport Use**

The current underlying zoning in the District Plan of the Whenuapai Air Base is Countryside Environment. This zone essentially provides for rural uses (including rural-residential) with some provision for non-residential uses as a discretionary activity.

(a) **Subdivision Consent**

A subdivision consent by way of a structure planning process to subdivide the Air Base into minimum 1-hectare lots could be sought. The Council initiated Waiarohia Structure Plan, currently includes a large portion of the Air Base site. This structure plan is catchment based. However, discussions could be undertaken with the WCC to see if it

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would be prepared to endorse the preparation of a structure plan encompassing all of the Whenuapai site.

(b) Resource Consent

The District Plan does provide scope for activities other than rural and residential to establish on the Whenuapai site. However, the majority of these uses would require a resource consent to establish.

The consent status (e.g. controlled or discretionary) and whether the consent is publicly notified, would depend largely on the scale of activity. In detail, the activity status would be determined by the ability to meet the standards in the District Plan, including those relating to:

- Area of the site/building occupied by a non-residential activity;
- Increases in impermeable surfaces on the site;
- Traffic generation;
- Noise levels;
- Signage;
- New infrastructure e.g. new stormwater and sewage connections; and
- Other effects on air quality and health - vibration, air discharges, artificial lighting.

The closer that the effects generated by the activity are to the effects generated by standard rural activities, the smoother the consent process would be.

However, it is noted that, while the air base is operating establishing a new dwelling, school or hospital within the Air Noise Boundary would be prohibited.

i. Activities in an existing building

Under the District Plan provisions there is potential for re-use of the existing buildings for non-airport use. Not surprisingly activities that result in low traffic generation, low noise levels, and only a limited amount of signage would be more easily consented.

For example, the use of an existing building for a non-residential activity, such as storage, not including retail sales and a non-residential total floor area not exceeding 250m², would be classed as a limited discretionary activity. This type of limited discretionary resource consent application is not required to be notified under the Plan.

It is noted that there are two scheduled heritage buildings on the site. Consent to change the use of these buildings, particularly if it involved additions or alterations to the building, would be more difficult.

ii. Activities in New Buildings or Outdoor Activities

There is also potential for obtaining resource consent for activities which require the construction of new buildings on the Whenuapai site or which will be undertaken
outdoors. The District Plan specifically contains rules for outdoor activities such as filming or outdoor storage.

Major considerations would be the impact of the activity on the rural character and amenity values of the Whenuapai area and whether the new activities on the site might lead to pressure for urban expansion.

Obtaining consent for an activity of a scale and intensity that was not consistent with the rural environment is likely to be difficult. The District Plan rules for the Countryside Environment can be used as a guide to determine what is an appropriate scale of activity. For example, in terms of traffic generation, activities which generate up to 20 vehicle movements per day (or 2% of the roads daily traffic volume) are a limited discretionary activity.

(c) Plan Change

If the MUL was moved to include the Air Base site, a plan change to the District Plan to provide for a zone(s), which allows a wider range of uses (i.e. other than rural) could be lodged with Waitakere City Council.

Given the location of the site in relation to the current MUL, and even the likely future alignment of the MUL (along the new SH18 alignment), the subject land is likely to take some time to be ‘developed’. That is, if growth were to proceed in a logical fashion, the development of the Whenuapai area would likely be a number of years away, given current demand and growth rates.
5 Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

The brief for this report is to advise government in relation to planning and RMA issues that are likely to affect any negotiation process for the sale of the land to prospective future owners. It is assumed that these prospective owners might contemplate a range of civilian uses, including continued operation as an airport.

Overall, there are a number of options for the future use of Whenuapai air base. These are generally, standard rural or rural-residential activities, a comprehensive mixed use development, civilian airport uses or a mix of military and civilian airport use.

5.1.1 Existing Situation

The current operations at the Air Base are authorised under the Resource Management Act 1991 by way of a designation in the Waitakere District Plan. The site is designated for ‘Defence Purposes’ and more specifically for a RNZAF Air Base and associated defence activities. The conditions, which apply to the designation, include the requirement for aircraft operations at the Base to meet specific noise standards.

The District Plan also contains ‘protection measures’ – to ensure that new development does not interfere with aircraft flight paths, restrictions are placed on the use of land and buildings directly beneath or within the boundaries of the approach surfaces to the airfield.

The site is located outside the Auckland Regional Council’s (ARC) metropolitan urban limits (MUL). Any activity, which is ‘urban’ in nature outside the MUL, is likely to be inconsistent with current regional and district planning policy. The District Plan has to be consistent with the Regional Policy Statements and Plans. The underlying zoning of the site in the Waitakere District Plan is ‘Countryside Environment’.

The level of urban development in the rural areas surrounding the base is expected to increase in the medium to long-term future. It is expected that the ARC will move the MUL north, closer to the Whenuapai Air Base to realign it with the new SH18 motorway designation. Waitakere City Council (WCC) has already started planning for development in this area, known as the Massey North-Hobsonville Corridor. Outside the MUL, WCC has shown a willingness to grant consent for greenfields subdivisions based on structure plans for sites of a density less than the standard 4-hectare limit. The Council initiated the Waiarohia Structure Plan, which includes a large part of the Air Base and provides for subdivision down to 1 hectare within the Air Base Outer Control Noise Boundary. While further planning in these areas is on-hold until the future status of the Whenuapai Air base is known, it is considered inevitable that because of growth pressures in the Auckland Region that the current “rural buffer” that the Air Base has, will be substantially reduced.

The ARC is currently coordinating the Upper Waitemata Harbour Study. This may identify a sustainable ‘capacity’ of urban development in the upper harbour catchments and therefore effectively limit the potential of the site due to the potential effects on the Waitemata Harbour. Results of the Study are not expected until the end of 2003.
comprehensive re-development of the site is unlikely to gain consent until the results of this study have been released.

The Whenuapai Air Base is a significant area of land in the context of growth options in the western part of urban Auckland. Whatever the future use of the site is, it will have an impact on the metropolitan urban limits and the form of the surrounding area.

5.1.2 Strategic and Political Direction

The Whenuapai Air Base is considered by the ARC to be regionally significant infrastructure. They would like to see the option of continuing use of the Whenuapai site as an airport maintained, as long as its operation as an airport would have regional benefits in the long term. The ARC consider that any future landuse of the Air Base may have significant social, environmental and economic impacts on the Auckland Region and therefore that the future of the Air Base needs to be considered in a wider context than just Waitakere City.

Waitakere City Council has been promoting the development of a commercial airport at Whenuapai and economic development on surrounding lands. They have considered maintaining an option for a shareholding interest in any airport and have entered into a MOU with Infratil to assess the viability of commercialisation of Whenuapai Air Base.

Council officers from WCC, North Shore City Council (NSCC), Rodney District Council (RDC) and the ARC are working together on this issue and providing feedback to their respective Council Committees.

Technically, gaining planning approval for the air base to continue operation as a civilian airport is challenging, but considered feasible. This would depend on the scale and type of civilian operation and its impact on existing facilities. It would likely require a publicly notified consent process at some stage.

5.1.3 Future Land Use Options

Overall, the regionally significant nature of the site leads to the following preliminary conclusions regarding the future land use options for the Whenuapai Air Base. The following options are set out generally in order, starting with those options, which would be considered to be more easily consentable through to those, which would be considered to be more long-term options. We have provided an estimate of the possible timeframe for establishing those uses and advice on the possible planning tools to achieve them.

(a) Standard Rural Activities

It is considered that there are no major planning constraints to the sale of the Air Base for development as rural residential housing, or for the purposes of other rural activities. One area, which requires further investigation, is whether there are any areas of contamination on the site. If contaminated areas are found, then they would require remediation before any rural or rural-residential activity could be established on the site.
The underlying Countryside Environment zoning would provide for the Air Base to be converted back to rural or rural-residential uses. A subdivision application to subdivide the site into 4-hectare lots, to provide for rural-residential housing, would be relatively easy to obtain, provided the subdivision was appropriately designed and able to be serviced. Consent to subdivide to the 4-hectare density level provided for in the Waitakere City District Plan could potentially be obtained within 3 months of lodgement of any application.

(b) Non-Airport Civilian uses of a Rural Intensity

Non-residential civilian uses could be established on the site either during the 5-year withdrawal period or after Defence has completely withdrawn.

There is limited provision in the District Plan within the ‘Countryside Environment’ for non-residential uses. These activities would predominantly require a discretionary activity resource consent, which might be publicly notified. The major considerations in the assessment of any consent application would be the impact of the activity on the rural character and amenity values of the Whenuapai area and whether the new activities on the site might lead to the pressure for urban expansion. Those activities of a scale and intensity consistent with the rural environment would be more easily consented. Consent for activities which utilise existing buildings (such as storage) and meets the District Plan standards for traffic generation, noise, signage, lighting and air discharges would most likely be non-notified and potentially able to be consented in a 3 month timeframe. It is noted however, that extra consideration would need to be given to any consent for re-use of the scheduled heritage buildings on the site.

(c) Civilian Airport Uses

i. Civilian Operator

It is considered that obtaining the necessary RMA consents for an independent civilian airport would be difficult and would require the support from local and regional authorities and local residents. However, preliminary indications are that the relevant Councils would support the use of Whenuapai as a civilian airport.

The most significant constraint to establishing an independent civilian airport is expected to be noise. If a civilian operation could establish within the existing (or substantially similar) noise contours then it would face a less difficult path than if extensions to the existing noise contours were required. Noise contours are likely to place a limit on the scale of any future operation.

The best planning tools for providing for civilian airport use on the Whenuapai site depends on how much continuing involvement Defence want to have with the site and how much control they want to have over any civilian operator. It also depends on whether there are currently any operators willing to pursue consents, or (if this is not the case) whether Defence needs to progress the consenting process in order to maximise land disposal possibilities (after the five-year withdrawal period).
If interest is currently being shown by civilian operators and Defence wish to have limited involvement in the consenting process, then the following options could be pursued in the short and long term by a civilian operator, to enable them to operate on the Whenuapai site.

A civilian operator could obtain a resource Consent to use of part of the site for civilian activities. This option would involve only limited involvement by Defence. The disadvantages would be that, the Operator may face more stringent consent conditions than under the existing designation. A consent application processed on a non-notified basis might be obtained in 3 months following lodgement. It is considered that there is the potential for a non-notified consent to be obtained if it could be clearly identified that the level of adverse effects generated by the airport activity wasn’t changing. However, it is noted that any non-notification decision would most likely be subject to judicial review. For this reason, it is considered that this is a viable option for an operator who wants to establish some presence on the site with a low level of activity. Another advantage of this short-term option is that it would allow the “permitted baseline” level of effects to be maintained as Defence was reducing its activities.

If the civilian operator could obtain network utility operator status (or was a local authority), it could seek a new designation for ‘airport uses’. Alternatively a private or Council initiated plan change could be promulgated to change the zoning to an airport zoning or similar. A Plan Change would require Council support and may be an option if the Council wants to promote airport uses of the site, particularly if a willing airport operator is not currently identified.

The process of obtaining a Plan Change/ designation would be smoother if the level of effects generated by the proposed airport was substantially similar to the permitted baseline level of effects generated by the military. It is considered that the process of obtaining a new designation or plan change, including preparation and consultation time, processing time and appeals to the environment court, would take approximately 2 years.

ii. Defence

Subject to the provisions of the Defence Act 1990, it may be possible for Defence (either on their own or in a joint venture, e.g. with WCC) to obtain consent for a level of civilian activity at Whenuapai. We note the example of combined military-civilian airfield at Base Woodbourne.

If there is no current interest from civilian operators in pursuing consent applications for general airport use on the Whenuapai site and Defence wants to maintain the option of selling the site as an airport as a future land disposal option, then they may wish to pursue an alteration to the existing designation or a resource consent application.

An alteration to the existing designation could provide for ‘general airport use’ – involving a combination of civilian and military activity. It is possible that such an alteration might be processed non-notified if there is no change in the level of effects e.g. the civilian operation can operate within the existing noise contours. This is only likely to be non-notified if the alteration provides for a low level of civilian activity.
Even if the alteration to the designation was notified it may be a smoother process than obtaining an entirely new designation. This may be a strategic option, even if initially the majority of activities on the site are RNZAF related. It maintains the option of transferring responsibility for the designation to another requiring authority in the future, particularly if Defence wish to maintain some ongoing use of Whenuapai, e.g. maritime based operations. It may make it easier for a civilian operator to obtain a new designation in the future if they already have responsibility for a designation allowing for combined military civilian airport use.

In the short-term, an alteration to the existing designation protects airport use of the site and therefore Defence’s future land disposal options, if there is no operator willing to apply for a new designation at this stage.

Alternatively Defence could seek a resource consent themselves to enable civilian operations within its designated site.

There exists some possibility that a civilian/ military operation or a “stand-alone” civilian airport may be able to establish with the existing permitted baseline level of effects. If this was established the transfer of responsibility for the designation to another requiring authority could potentially take place. However, further expansion of the civilian airport operations would likely need additional consents.

(d) Structure Plan

Subdivision down to a level below the minimum 4-hectare density limit set in the District Plan may be achieved by way of a structure plan, initiated either privately or by Council. A significant amount of expert assessment from planning, ecological, landscape and visual, engineering ecological assessment would be required in any application. The precedent provided by existing subdivisions would indicate the possibility to subdivide down to 1 hectare. However, these structure plans are currently being processed and have not yet been approved. In addition, Waitakere City is currently reviewing its approach to structure plans to see if they are achieving their designed aim.

A Plan change to introduce a structure plan into the District Plan would be notified. On paper, such a Plan Change would be expected to be processed in approximately 1 year. However, considering the location and size of the Whenuapai site and the impact that any development on the site will have on the form of the region, significant consultation time would be required prior to lodgement to get Council and community support. It could be expected that any structure plan would be appealed to the Environment Court. In total, it is expected that including preparation time and Environment Court appeals, obtaining consent for a structure plan, which had Council support would take approximately 4 years.
(e) Non-Airport Civilian Uses of a Urban Intensity

While, a change of use, which utilises the existing buildings and facilities, could be established relatively easily, a re-development of the site for civilian non-airport uses (residential, commercial, industrial, educational or other uses) is problematic from a policy perspective. It would require support from the ARC to move the metropolitan urban limits, and support from WCC, NSCC and RDC to re-prioritise the areas in the Northwest of the Auckland Region, which have been identified for urban development in the next twenty years. This may allow the development of the Whenuapai site for urban uses to start in the medium term future (7-10 years).

Without the support of the Councils, a comprehensive redevelopment of the site for non-airport uses (e.g. residential, commercial, retail etc) would likely be considered only a long-term possibility (20 years plus). Either scenario requires a publicly notified process.

5.1.4 Areas of Further Technical Investigation to Focus On

(a) Permitted Base Line level of Effects

It will be important to establish as soon as possible the “permitted baseline” of existing Defence activities. This will require a detailed assessment of the nature of existing activities occurring on the Base, as well as those activities that NZDF can undertake on the Base under the existing designation if it chooses. The next step would be to determine whether the level of adverse effects generated by a civilian operation would be broadly equivalent to the “permitted baseline” level of effects.

In particular, further investigation should be undertaken at an early stage by either Defence or a potential civilian airport operator into what different types of civilian airport operation could be undertaken within the existing noise contours or substantially similar contours.

District Plan changes to impose noise contours over existing urban areas would be very difficult, both technically (noise insulation of a large number of existing properties may be required) and politically (community and Council support). The extension of noise contours over the existing rural areas will likely result in noise effects, which may need to be mitigated (e.g. acoustic insulation) and restrictions on the ability to subdivide and develop.

(b) Limitations of the Existing Designation

A literal reading of “just the words” in the District Plan indicate that the activities permitted under the existing designation would be restricted to activities undertaken by the RNZAF. However, a review of the Land Management Plan would appear to indicate that the noise contours incorporate provision for an expansion of activities at Whenuapai, including a minor amount of civilian flights (6 movements per day) and a runway extension. Further investigation could be undertaken into the background information that was provided to WCC at the time of notification of the District Plan, to determine if it indicated that there would be some limited use of the Air Base by civilian aircraft.
If this proves to be the case, this would provide for a civilian operator to undertake a limited amount of flights within the scope of the existing designation.

(c) Statutory Constraints of the Defence Act 1990

Further investigation should be undertaken into whether the provision of the Defence Act 1990 allow for Defence to provide for civilian operations at Whenuapai under a designation, either in its own capacity or in a joint venture structure with another party, such as a local authority. Consideration might also be given to other legislation such as the Airport Authority Act 1966 of the Civil Aviation Act 1990 and any assistance or constraints they may have.

5.1.5 Strategic RMA Considerations

Regardless of the future use of the site, some resource management issues will arise over the transition period of the withdrawal of RNZAF activities from Whenuapai over the next five years. A prudent approach would suggest that these issues be dealt with sooner rather than later in order to provide better certainty.

(a) Public and Political Support

Any application under the RMA is assessed according to the effects the proposal would generate, but any future use would also need to be consistent with local and regional strategic and statutory policies and plans. The RMA also provides substantial opportunity for the public to participate in the decision-making process.

Any proposal by Defence or another party would have a more difficult and lengthy consent process without political and public support. In determining a future use, consultation with the Council and community stakeholders will be essential.

(b) Discussions with the Councils regarding future urban development

i. Re-development of the Site for Urban Activities

Structure Planning by WCC to allow urban development of areas immediately to the south and west of Whenuapai is well advanced, but has been on-hold since the Government’s announcement regarding Whenuapai in December 2002. It is therefore timely that Defence consider the future of Whenuapai now so that it may be incorporated into this planning process. This may allow the Whenuapai site to be developed for urban uses in the medium term (10-20 years) and widens the land disposal options for Defence.

ii. Extension of Noise Contours

The opportunity exists for a future civilian operator to signal to the Councils now, that a future (economically feasible) civilian operation would require extended noise contours. It could then be factored into the current regional growth planning. The extension of noise contours becomes more difficult if substantial growth planning has been done in respect of the surrounding area.
iii. Limitations imposed on any new designation or Airport Zoning

While there is a precedent for airports to locate outside the MUL, other urban activities would have greater difficulty. The current zoning of the area surrounding the Base would not provide for the establishment of activities, which may want to locate next to a new “regional airport”, such as servicing industries, retail or accommodation. While, these activities may be provided for within any new designation for “airport activities”, any development of ancillary activities at an urban density and/or new infrastructure development, would be difficult to consent as the Councils may see them as either individually or cumulatively leading to incremental urban expansion.

Under any scenario, discussions with the Council as to the appropriate scope and management of any development intended for the site would be essential.

(c) Importance of maintaining a level of airport activity on the site

If this is a land disposal option that Defence wish to maintain, then it will be important to maintain the existing level of airport activity. While activities such as non-airport uses of existing buildings may be easier to consent, converting a large proportion of the site to these uses may restrict land disposal options in the future. As part of the processing of any consent application the effects of any civilian airport use of the site will be compared to the “permitted baseline” level of effects. If that “permitted baseline” level of effects is gradually reduced over time it may make the consenting process for a civilian airport more difficult.
Appendix A

District Plan Policies
**District Plan Policies**

This Appendix contains the text of the issues, objectives, policies and methods from the Waitakere City Proposed District Plan, which have been referred to in previous sections of this report. The paragraph numbers and text are as they appear in the Policy Section of the Plan.

**Part 3 The City’s Environment**

Table 3.6(b), page 17 describes the City’s other landscapes including ‘Countryside’.

**Excerpt from Table 3.6(b) The City’s Other Landscapes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Landscape Areas</th>
<th>Landscape Elements</th>
<th>Landscape Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Country side          | • Gently rolling hills  
                        | • Terraces, pasture and cropping land  
                        | • Shelter belts  
                        | • Small areas of remnant bush  
                        | • Streams  
                        | • Coastal edge to the north  
                        | • 1-2 storey buildings  
                        | • Scattered housing and farm buildings | • Dominant pastoral “image”  
                                            | • Quiet (except around airbase and SH 16) |

Table 3.7(a), page 21 describes the various local areas, including Hobsonville and Whenuapai Airbase and Whenuapai.

**Excerpt from Table 3.7 (a) Local Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Area</th>
<th>Landscape Elements</th>
<th>Landscape Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Hobsonville and Whenuapai Airbase | • Planned government villages  
                                    | • State houses  
                                    | • Links with airbase buildings | • Strong sense of place |
| Whenuapai                       |                                        |                            | • Edge village, strong coastal links  
                                    |                                        | • Isolation |
Part 5 Objectives, Policies and Methods

Policy 10.15
Settlement within those parts of the City where existing noise levels exceed that compatible with human health should be avoided, provided that settlement may occur where any adverse effect on occupants of any site can be remedied or mitigated through the design of structures and the screening of the site from the noise source.

Explanation
There are some areas of the City, particularly around the RNZAF air bases, where noise levels exceed that compatible with human health. A number of high noise routes have also been identified. In the case of airbases, the District Plan has adopted a policy that seeks to avoid further settlement in these areas as a precaution against further harm. However it recognises that this should be balanced against the possibility that design solutions may offset the effect.

Methods
District Plan Rules:
- Subdivision Rules
- General Noise Standards Rules
- Noise Rules

Policy 10.21
Activities including structures, trees, and lighting within the approach path of an airfield, shown on the Airbase Map, must be operated and/or be of a height that is consistent with the safe operation of aircraft using the airfield.

Explanation
Waitakere City Council has two airbases associated with the Ministry of Defence. This policy is concerned with ensuring that there is no impediment to the operation of aircraft using the base. This requires regard to be had for the height of structures and trees, and glare from lights.

Methods
District Plan Rules
- Height Rules
- Air Discharges, Odour, Dust, glare and Vibration Rules

Policy 10.24
Activities in areas surrounding RNZAF Base Auckland should be managed in a way that ensure emissions of odour, dust, electromagnetic radiation and bird aggregation do not cause a hazard to aircraft flying in association with RNZAF Base Auckland. Where activities cannot be managed in a way that avoids the creation of such a hazard, they
must be located at a sufficient distance from RNZAF base Auckland so that such an effect is avoided.

Methods

District Plan Rules

- Air Discharges, Odour, Dust, Glare and Vibration Rules

Policy 10.25

The adverse effects of aircraft noise arising from existing use of the runways and helicopter land areas at RNZAF Base Auckland on the people’s health and safety in existing and future residential areas of the City should be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Explanation

The adverse effects of flying activity in association with RNZAF Base Auckland can be avoided by limiting the location of sensitive activities in areas of high cumulative noise. Activities, which are sensitive to high cumulative levels of aircraft noise, are residential activities, hospitals, educational institutions, and rest homes. Adverse effects may be remedied or mitigated by the application of acoustic insulation to activities, which are sensitive to aircraft noise within areas of moderately high aircraft noise levels.

Methods

District Plan Rules:

- Rules controlling activities which are sensitive to aircraft noise in identified areas;
- Rules specifying the need for acoustic insulation for activities, which are sensitive to aircraft noise in, identified areas.

Policy 10.1

Non-residential activities should be managed in a way that emissions of odour, dust, electro-magnetic radiation, radio frequency radiation and other discharges to air do not cause a nuisance, or otherwise have an adverse effect on the health of occupants of surrounding residential properties. Where a resource consent is required and specific reference is made in the rules or assessment criteria to health and safety matters, an assessment of adverse effects will be required. This will include, where relevant, reference to any appropriate standards or scientific opinion. Where activities cannot be managed in a way that avoids the creation of a nuisance on adjacent sites;

- They must be located at a sufficient distance from those sites, or within an appropriate Working Environment.
- Or appropriate performance measures to minimise emissions should be imposed so that the adverse effects of any emissions are avoided.
Explanation

The perception of what is a distasteful odour can vary from person to person. Tolerance can also vary. However, although the identification of odour nuisance is inherently problematic, this policy has been adopted to limit the impact of odour emissions. In addition, dust and other discharges can be nuisance and a health problem. This policy seeks to limit their impacts on surrounding sites. A precautionary approach should be taken to the management of electro-magnetic radiation and radio-frequency radiation.

Rule 3 in the Community and Working Environments specifies, as a Permitted Activity, minimum setbacks from boundaries with a Living and/or Open Space Environment. Those minimum setbacks reinforce the intention of this policy. However, it is acknowledged that there will be circumstances, such as those related to the particular use proposed, constraints of the development site and the nature and position of adjoining development which will enable the policy to be met at a lesser separation distance than specified in the rules.

Methods

District Plan Rules:

- Non-residential Activities Rules. Non-residential activities are permitted activities where odour, dust and other discharges emitted or generated are not discernible by neighbours. Where any emission is discernible, a resource consent is necessary. Provision is made for the location of more noxious activities within the City’s Working Environments. Requirements for the Lincoln Working Environment are more stringent than in other Working Environments, in recognition of the greater mix of activities in this area.

- Air Discharges, Odour, Dust, Glare, and Vibration Rules

- Working Community Environment Rules

- Rules and criteria relating to infrastructure effects on the well-being, safety and health of any person.

Policy 10.2

Activities should not emit noise such that it causes a nuisance to occupants of surrounding properties.

Explanation

Noise has been identified by residents as one of the most significant concerns that affect health. Noise, single intensive noise sources and background or ambient noise levels, contribute to stress, which in turn can become a significant factor affecting people’s health. This policy is concerned with addressing both single source or event noise and ambient noise levels.
Methods

*District Plan Rules:*

- General Noise Standards
- Noise Rules

Standards for noise are set out in all the Human Environments. In all cases the standards are set to reflect the characteristic levels of quiet of the area, and all fall within the safety levels for humans. Any activity emitting noise exceeding these standards is a non-complying activity.

**Policy 10.3**

Activities should be managed in a way that any associated artificial lighting of roads, driveways, signs and sites and the exterior of buildings do not detract from the ability of occupants of surrounding buildings to achieve uninterrupted and adequate levels of sleep.

*Explanation*

Artificial lighting, particularly in residential areas, can be of such a level of glare that it reduces people’s ability to sleep, or interrupts sleep to the extent that it creates stress, and at times, direct physical effects on the health of residents. There are two aspects to this problem: the general loss of a dark night sky from the cumulative effects of lighting and the nuisance caused by single sources that emit a high level of glare.

Methods

*District Plan Rules:*

- Air Discharges, Odour, Dust, Glare and Vibration Rules
- Non-Residential Activities Rules
- Signs Rules
- Open Space Environments Rules

*Other Methods*

- Information on possible lighting design solutions;
- Management of lighting in parks and on roads;
- Code of Practice; lighting guidelines.

**Policy 11.10**

Non-residential activities should be designed and managed in a way that:

- Maintains the visual amenity values of the Environment they are in;
Maintains the amenity of the site and surrounding area when viewed from the street;

Adequately screens any associated carparking, vehicle access and storage areas from view, from residential sites.

*Explanation*

Large commercial and industrial buildings, paved areas and accessways can have a considerable impact on the appearance of different Environments. This policy seeks to manage impacts by requiring the screening of these areas from view from either public places, or from surrounding residential properties. Impacts on amenity are particularly pressing with the more residential Environments, and where natural features predominate, but it is also an issue in the Working and Community Environments.

*Methods*

*District Plan Rules:*

- Non-Residential Activities Rules
- Working and Community Environment Rules

*Policy 11.13*

Activities should be carried out in a way that maintains the characteristic levels of quiet of each Human Environment.

*Explanation*

This policy is designed to protect a level of quiet found in different Environments, and avoids incremental rises in noise to the level such that the amenity value associated with that quiet is adversely affected.

*Methods*

*District Plan Rules:*

- General Noise Standards Rules
- Noise Rules

*Policy 11.30*

Non-residential activities in the non-urban areas of the city should be of a type, scale and intensity that will not, on an individual or cumulative basis, lead to adverse effect on the maintenance and enhancement of rural landscape and amenity values. In particular non-residential activities that may be more appropriately located in the urban area and which generate a significant number of trips from the urban area and/or cause other non-residential activities to group around them thereby leading to incremental urban growth, should avoid locating in non-urban areas.
Explanation

Non-residential activities that serve the urban area often seek out locations that are on the edge of the city. The rural character of the city fringe can be lost through this pressure as incremental changes create a semi-urban feel, while activities draw traffic into locations not designed to cater for this traffic, causing congestion. This policy recognises that a range of non-residential activities can locate in the non-urban areas of the city without adverse effects, particularly those serving the local area. However, activities that have an urban focus are often best located within the urban area.

Methods

District Plan Rules:

- Non-residential Activities Rules
- Traffic Generation Rules

Policy 10.8

Land use development and subdivision must recognise the need for a transportation strategy which provides for the safe and efficient movement of people through private and public transport in a way that avoids, remedies or mitigates potential adverse effects on the environment and which does not compromise the needs of future generations, through ensuring the:

- Safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles around the City;
- Recognising and providing for the interdependence between transportation and other activities;
- Supporting the creation of an efficient public transport network which provides an integrated system with appropriate levels of convenience and services;
- Protection of the transport corridor for public transport purposes, conveyance of goods and communications;
- Ensuring that the impact of activities on the capacity and safety of the road system is adequately catered for;
- Maintaining amenity values that contribute to the well-being of residents and workers;
- Integrating roads with safe and efficient pedestrian cycle routes;
- Minimising impacts of noise and traffic movement on the amenity of surrounding sites;
- Contributing where required to an upgrading of the transport system, proportionate to the pressures on that system created by the development proposed.
Explanation

There is a need to manage the use and development of the City’s transportation resources in a way that enables people in communities to provide for their social and economic well-being, while providing for the sustainable management of the City’s environment. The roading system has been designed around the efficient flow of vehicle traffic and relief of congestion. These aims are important, but just as important are the health of surrounding residents, amenity levels and the need to provide adequately for public transport, pedestrian and cycle access. The transportation system must provide for an adequate balance of these concerns.

Methods

District Plan Rules:

- Subdivision Rules
- General Noise Standards Rules
- Assessment criteria for subdivision design on Greenfields sites require, amongst other concerns, that roads are designed to ensure safe and efficient movement of traffic. Criteria also include assessment of impacts on amenity values.
- Subdivision along high noise routes (strategic arterial roads, regional arterial roads, distinct arterial roads, as shown on the primary roading network), must be designed to minimise or mitigate the impacts of traffic noise.
- Rules relating to financial contributions provide a formula for calculating the impact levy for the supply of infrastructure.

Other Methods

- Council Code of Practice.

Policy 10.9

Any settlement should be provided with adequate appropriate and safe infrastructure sufficient to ensure the health (including safety from fire) of residents and the wider community. Reticulated networks for the disposal of sewage and stormwater, for water supply, electricity supply and for telephones are available through much of the city. These networks may provide the most environmentally appropriate means of servicing developments, and developments should be provided with connections to these networks where that is possible and appropriate. Where a network is not available, adequate provision should be made through other means. Any such provision should be consistent with other objectives relating to the protection of natural and physical resources, compatible with existing disposal and supply systems, and appropriately designed to ensure a safe service and minimisation of maintenance costs.
**Explanation**

Provision of infrastructure, to a level that ensures adverse effects on public health are avoided, is an essential aspect of any objective relating to the health of a community. While there are certain efficiencies achieved by requiring sites to be connected to a networked system, this is not the only way of responding to the problem. Therefore this policy adopts an approach that does not stipulate what kind of infrastructure is provided, so long as it achieves appropriate environmental outcomes.

**Methods**

**District Plan Rules:**

- Subdivision Rules
- Infrastructure Rules

**Other Methods**

- Investment by the community in sustainable infrastructure systems that are consistent with maintaining the health of residents;
- Provision of information about infrastructure design.

**Policy 10.10**

**Any activity that generates vibration should be carried out in a way that does not cause a nuisance, or otherwise have an adverse effect on the health of occupants of adjacent properties.**

**Explanation**

- The vibration caused by machinery, such as electric motors, can cause considerable nuisance and distress for surrounding neighbours. Therefore this policy seeks to limit these impacts.

**Methods**

**District Plan Rules:**

- Air Discharges, Odour, Dust, Glare and Vibration Rules
- Quarry Special Area Rules

Vibration emitted by any activity must not be discernible at the boundary of the site within the Living, Countryside, Coastal and Rural Villages, Bush Living, Foothills and Waitakere Ranges Environments. Within the Working and Community Environments the concerns are the impacts outside the Environment itself. This is due to the primarily non-residential nature of these Environments. Vibration should not be discernible at the boundary of any site adjacent to another Human Environment. Any activity exceeding this standard must have a resource consent.
Policy 10.17
Settlement in all parts of the City should be at a density that is within the capacity of water supply stormwater, wastewater and solid waste infrastructure to safely absorb the effects of that settlement, and to provide for the health of all residents, visitors and workers.

Explanation
The safe management of water supply, stormwater, wastewater and solid wastes is essential to the health of the community. Any new settlement in an area brings increased pressure on systems, either on-site systems such as septic tanks, or networked infrastructure. Although the community can choose to invest in the expansion of infrastructure, it is essential that population densities remain within the capacity of whatever exists at that time. In some areas, of course, densities are dictated by the need to protect vulnerable natural and physical resources. This may result in densities that are less than those that could be accommodated by the infrastructure. This policy signals the importance of managing population density in terms of human health, as well as the health of other aspects of the environment.

Methods
District Plan Rules:
- Subdivision Rules
- Residential Activities/Density Rules
- Building Coverage Rules
- Infrastructure Rules

Policy 10.19
The location of activities and buildings on known contaminated sites should be avoided, where this will lead to adverse effects on human health and/or safety. Where there is a more than minor adverse effect development may only occur where remediation and restoration actions in relation to such a site have been carried out, sufficient to ensure that the contaminated materials on site will have no adverse effects on human health.

Explanation
A range of industries and activities have, in the past, contaminated a number of sites around the City. Known contaminated sites are noted on a list held by Council. It is important that no habitable building should be located on such a site, or the site be used, until the contamination has been adequately dealt with.
Methods

District Plan Rules:

- Hazardous Facilities and Contaminated Sites Rules

Policy 11.1

Settlement should be of a type and a density that protects amenity values, including neighbourhood character of different parts of the City, by:

- Maintaining the low density of sites with high levels of private planting, large areas of open space around dwellings and detached housing characteristic in the Glen Eden, Green bay and New Lynn local character areas and the Coastal and Rural Villages.

- Allowing for development within the Kelston, Te Atatu South and Te Atatu Peninsula local character areas, provided that it maintains the existing low-density character high levels of planting, and openness of the area;

- Providing for more intensive settlement in other parts of the Living Environment in a way that protects the wellbeing of residents and enhances the amenity of these areas;

- Ensuring that settlement densities are consistent with the dispersed pattern of settlement within the Countryside Environment;

- Providing for a pattern of settlement in the Foothills Environment that is in keeping with complex, varied and overall natural character of the area;

- Maintaining the characteristic patterns of settlement within the Rural Villages Environment and Coastal Villages Environment.

Explanation

Within each Environment there are variations in building style and section size, which contribute to the particular character of different neighbourhoods. Residents value the different features, which contribute to the character. This policy has been adopted to ensure that any pressures from future development in the City, are managed in a way that is compatible with amenity values and character. This policy does not seek to keep densities similar to present levels in all parts of the City. Rather, the policy manages the rate and quality of change and takes account of cumulative impacts within certain defined parameters. (See Part 7 for further explanation of the links between policies relation to urban containment and protection of amenity values).

Methods

District Plan Rules:

- Residential Activities/Density Rules

- Provision for Medium Density Housing
Subdivision Rules

Part 6 Explanation of the Strategic Direction: Policies and Methods

6.1 General Themes
There are a number of general themes that underpin the policies and methods adopted by Waitakere City Council. The following themes are relevant to Whenuapai Air Base:

6.1.1 Theme One: Urban Consolidation & Managing Growth Pressures, page 2
6.1.4 Theme Four: Landscape, Amenity Values & Neighbourhood, and page 12

Excerpt from Table 6.1.4 (a) Setting the Relationship between the City’s Landscapes and Amenity Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Management Areas</th>
<th>Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whenuapai/Herald Island, Hobsonville, Whenuapai Airbases, Waitakere Township</td>
<td>Rural Villages Environment</td>
<td>Regard must also be had for impacts on the surrounding environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Policies and Methods
The following policies and methods are relevant for scenarios being investigated for Whenuapai Air Base:

6.2.1 Managing Population Pressures Outside the Urban Area, page 18
6.2.6 Non-Residential Activities, page 25
Appendix B

Regional Growth Strategy
Future Growth Capacities

The following information on future growth capacities is summarised from the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement (October 2001).

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) has allocated future population growth capacities by sub-regional and territorial areas based on analysis of population projections and application of the key principles of the strategy. The Northern and Western Sectors Agreement sets out how the allocated growth capacities for these two sectors can be accommodated in appropriate locations, form and sequencing over the next 20 years. It also identifies the key issues associated with managing this growth, and sets in place agreed principles and methods/actions to address these issues.

The Growth Strategy has allocated a population growth capacity of 378,000 to the year 2050 for the Northern and Western sectors. The share of this growth capacity between North Shore City, Waitakere City and Rodney District is shown below.

Table 1

Regional Growth Strategy Allocation of Growth Capacities for the Northern and Western Sectors - 1996-2050

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Shore City</td>
<td>172,000</td>
<td>292,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitakere City</td>
<td>156,000</td>
<td>303,000</td>
<td>147,000</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodney District</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>177,000</td>
<td>111,000</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Northern and Western Sectors</td>
<td>394,000</td>
<td>772,000</td>
<td>378,000</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 below provides a summary of the distribution of growth capacities for the period 1996 to 2021 for each of the territorial authorities in the Northern and Western Sectors.

Table 2

Northern and Western Sectors Agreement - Summary of Distribution of Growth Capacities - 1996-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth Location</th>
<th>North Shore City</th>
<th>Waitakere City</th>
<th>Rodney District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing Urban Area (1999 MUL)</td>
<td>75,510 (98%)</td>
<td>55,000 (74%)</td>
<td>49,874 (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Growth Outside 1999 MUL</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13,000 (17%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1,175 (2%)</td>
<td>6,500 (9%)</td>
<td>23,611 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Additional Capacity</td>
<td>76,685 (100%)</td>
<td>75,500 (100%)</td>
<td>73,485 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This growth capacity meets the Auckland Regional Council’s medium population projection for the year 2021. (also refer figure 2 for location of growth areas)

### Table 3

**Population Capacities and Population Projection Comparison 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>North Shore City</th>
<th>Waitakere City</th>
<th>Rodney District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996 Population</td>
<td>172,174</td>
<td>156,000</td>
<td>66,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-2001 Additional Capacity</td>
<td>76,684</td>
<td>74,500</td>
<td>73,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>248,858</td>
<td>230,500</td>
<td>139,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auckland Regional Council Population Projection for 2021</td>
<td>242,589</td>
<td>229,972</td>
<td>116,946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from providing for population capacities, the Northern and Western Sectors Agreement seeks to promote a better distribution of business and employment opportunities locally as part of growth management. Table 4 shows some key statistics relating to business zoned land and employment targets.

### Table 4

**Business Zoned Land and Employment Targets in the Northern and Western Sectors - 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territorial Authority</th>
<th>Business Zoned land in 1996 (hectares)</th>
<th>Number of jobs in area 1996 (full and part time)</th>
<th>Business Zoned land in 2021 (hectares)</th>
<th>Target % of labour force employed in city</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Shore City</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>57,885</td>
<td>800.7</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitakere City</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>36,696</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodney District</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>20,055</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Regional Policy Statement
Regional Policy Statement

This Appendix contains the text of the issues, objectives, policies and methods from the Auckland Regional Policy Statement (RPS), which have been referred to in previous sections of this report. The paragraph numbers and text are as they appear in the RPS.

2.3 Issues

Issue 2.3.2 Urban development in the Region threatens several environmental qualities and threshold

Development in West Auckland

The Waitakere foothills are an important visual foreground to the bush clad hills. Development beyond the Hobsonville Ridge would need to take account of the pollution-sensitive upper Waitemata Harbour, a regionally significant estuarine area. Development in the Kumeu, Oratia, Opanuku and Swanson catchments would need to consider the requirements for the operation of the Whenuapai and Hobsonville airports and to balance these against the benefits of further urban development in the area.

2.5 Strategic Direction

2.5.2 Strategic Policies

Policy 3

“Urban development is to be contained, within the metropolitan urban limits and the limits of rural and coastal settlements as defined so that:

i. Expansion of urban activities outside the metropolitan urban limits as defined and shown in the RPS from time to time is not permitted;

ii. Environmental values protected by the metropolitan urban limits and/or the limits of rural or coastal settlements are not adversely affected, and that the integrity of those limits is maintained;

iii. Urban intensification at selected locations is provided for and encouraged. Selection of these places will take into account, amongst other things, any significant adverse effects which arise from the interaction with any regionally significant physical resources;

iv. Expansion of rural and coastal settlements outside the limits of existing urban zones and settlements (at the time of notification of the RPS or as shown or provided for in the RPS) is not permitted;

v. The identification and provision of areas for future urban growth are managed through an integrated process on a regional basis and are consistent with the Strategic direction.
2.6 Regional Development

2.6.1 Policy: Urban Growth Management

1. The growth of metropolitan Auckland is to be managed with reference to a 30 year time horizon, in a manner which gives effect to the Purpose and Principles of the RM Act, is consistent with the Strategic Direction, and has regard to:

   i. The rate of urban development occurring in, and forecast for, the whole Region and sectors of the Region

   ii. The capacity realistically available for further urban development, including

      a) Provision for metropolitan urban expansion

      b) The potential for intensification within the urban area

      c) The growth capacity, and contribution that may be made by rural and coastal settlements

   iii. The need to recognise and provide for areas of significant natural and physical resources requiring protection from urban development in existing and future areas and rural areas;

   iv. Areas where provision should be made for future urban development, and priorities for, and sequencing of development;

   v. An explicit evaluation (as required by Section 32 of the RM Act) of the costs and benefits of alternative forms of development to accommodate Auckland’s growth;

   vi. The use of financial contributions as provided for in section 108 of the RM Act.

2. Urban development shall be contained within the defined limits (including the metropolitan urban limits and the limits of rural and coastal settlements – referred to in strategic Policy 2.5.2-3) shown in the RPS from time to time, and its form shall be planned and undertaken through an integrated process on a regional basis and in ways that are consistent with the Strategic Direction and:

   i. Provide for urban intensification around selected nodes and along selected transport corridors;

   ii. Provide for higher intensities of urban activities at selected locations within areas of new development;

   iii. Bring about patterns of activities that will mitigate the effects of increased travel and improve the energy efficiency and convenience of urban areas;

   iv. Enable the operation of existing regional infrastructure and provision of necessary new or upgraded regional infrastructure which is operated and developed in a manner which ensures that any adverse effects of those activities on the environment are avoided, remedied or mitigated;
v. Facilitate efficient provision of services (including utility services, transportation facilities or services, and community facilities and services, such as schools, libraries, public open spaces) through the utilisation or upgrading of existing facilities, or the provision of new ones;

vi. Maintain and enhance amenity values within the existing urban area, and achieve high standards of amenity in areas of new development;

vii. Do not give rise to conflicts between incompatible land uses;

viii. Avoids, remedies, or mitigates adverse effects on the environment.

3. Countryside living may be provided for in rural areas to the extent that provision will:

   o Give effect to Part II of the Act and

   o Be consistent with the Strategic Direction, and with the relevant provisions of Chapters 3 to 18 inclusive of this RPS and

   o Take into account and make appropriate provision for the following matters;

i. The extent to which natural resources are protected and or enhanced;

ii. The avoidance of significant adverse effects (including cumulative adverse effects) on:

   a) The environmental values protected by defined limits to metropolitan Auckland and defined limits of rural or coastal settlements

   b) The safe and efficient operation of existing regional infrastructure

   c) The necessary upgrading of existing regional infrastructure

   d) The provision of new regional infrastructure

   e) The rural character of the region

Where significant adverse effects cannot be avoided, they shall be mitigated or remedied,

iii. Avoiding prematurely foreclosing, or compromising options for accommodating the further growth and development of urban areas.

iv. The avoidance, remediation or mitigation of significant adverse effects on the regional roading network.

v. Avoidance of the creation of conflicts between quarrying (and similar activities dependent on locationally specific natural resources) and other incompatible activities.

vi. Avoidance of conflicts between incompatible activities. Where such conflicts cannot be avoided they shall be remedied or mitigated.

vii. Minimising the loss of versatility and productive potential of soil resources. Where it is necessary for the better achievement of the purposes of the RM Act to compromise
the versatility and/or productivity of the soil resource, the greatest protection shall be
given to the most versatile soils.

2.6.4 Policy: Rural Areas

1. The use, development and protection of natural and physical resources and the subdivision
of land in the rural parts of the Region (except as provided by Policy 2.6.1-3) is to be
managed in an integrated manner, that:

  o Gives effect to Part II of the RM Act;

  o Is consistent with the Strategic Direction and with the relevant provisions of Chapters
    3 to 18 inclusive of this RPS;

  o Takes account of and makes appropriate provision for the following matters

    i. The avoidance of significant adverse effects (including cumulative adverse effects)
       on:

       a) The environmental values protected by defined limits to metropolitan Auckland
          and defined limits to rural or coastal settlements

       b) The safe and efficient operation of existing regional infrastructure

       c) The necessary upgrading of existing regional infrastructure

       d) The provision of new regional infrastructure

       e) The rural character of the region. Where significant adverse effects cannot be
          avoided they shall be remedied or mitigated.

    ii. Avoiding prematurely foreclosing or compromising options for accommodating the
         further growth and development of urban areas.

    iii. Significant adverse effects on the regional roading network are avoided, remedied or
         mitigated.

    iv. Avoidance of the creation of conflicts between quarrying (and similar activities
        dependent on locationally specific natural resources) and other incompatible
        activities.

    v. Avoidance of conflicts between incompatible activities. Where such conflicts
        cannot be avoided they shall be remedied or mitigated.

    vi. Management of the use of rural land with regard to the availability and
        sustainability of water resources.

    vii. Minimising the loss of versatility and productive potential of soil resources. Where
         it is necessary for the better achievement of the purposes of the RM Act to
         compromise the versatility and/or productivity of the soil resource, the greatest
         protection shall be given to the most versatile soils.
viii. Consideration of alternative locations (including locations in urban areas) for activities which give rise to significant adverse effects on the environment.

ix. Environmental enhancement and or remediation opportunities.

2. In rural areas provision shall be made for marae, papakainga and customary uses of ancestral taonga in accordance with Policy 3.4.4, and with regard to the matters set out in Policy 2.6.4-1.