

**BEFORE INDEPENDENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS
AT LOWER HUTT**

**I MUA NGĀ KAIKŌMIHANA WHAKAWĀ MOTUHAKE
TE AWA KAIRANGI**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991 (Act)

AND

IN THE MATTER of the hearing of submissions on the
Proposed Lower Hutt District Plan

HEARING TOPIC Residential and Rural Zones (Hearing
Stream 3)

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF GLEN COOPER ON BEHALF OF
SILVERSTREAM PARK CHRISTIAN CENTRE**

(PLANNING)

5 JUNE 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. My full name is Glen Robert Cooper. I am a director and principal planner at Cuttriss Consultants Limited. I am authorised to give this evidence on behalf of Silverstream Park Christian Centre Charitable Trust.
- 1.2. I have 18 years' experience in resource management with roles in both the public and private sector. I hold a Bachelor of Science, and I am an Associate Member of the New Zealand Planning Institute and hold a current Making Good Decisions hearing commissioner accreditation (although non-practicing).
- 1.3. I have only very recently become involved with the submission by Silverstream Park Christian Centre. I have familiarised myself with the landholdings, activities, facilities, history and future intentions relating to the land at:
 - (a) 320 Eastern Hutt Road, Stokes Valley.
 - (b) 3 & 15 Reynolds Bach Drive and Section 2 SO 429576¹.
 - (c) Sections 1–5 SO 461420.
- 1.4. While this is a Council level hearing, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 and agree to comply with it. My evidence is within my area of expertise, except where I state that I rely on the evidence of others.

¹ This unaddressed parcel of land owned by Silverstream Park Christian Centre was inadvertently omitted from the submission text but is shown in submission Figure 1. I do not consider this a scope issue as the land was clearly shown in the submission.

- 1.5. My evidence is given in support of Silverstream Park Christian Centre's submission on the Proposed Lower Hutt District Plan.
- 1.6. My evidence discusses the relevant planning framework and responds to the section 42A recommendation to retain the notified zoning and precinct extent. I rely on the corporate evidence of **Mr Ross** regarding the operation of Silverstream Retreat, the consented development plan, and future intentions. I rely on the civil engineering evidence of **Mr Godwin** in relation to servicing, stormwater, flooding, wastewater and water supply.

2. RELEVANT OBJECTIVES AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1. Relevant themes of the Proposed District Plan relating to the site include strategic and general zone objectives and policies that seek to provide for urban development and housing capacity, ensure development is coordinated with infrastructure, and to recognise the Silverstream Retreat Precinct as a special area including for conference facilities and visitor accommodation.
- 2.2. The National Policy Statement on Urban Development is also relevant. In particular, the planning framework should enable sufficient housing development capacity and support well-functioning urban environments. This is discussed in more detail in the submission and for the sake of efficiency I do not repeat it.
- 2.3. The relevant question is not simply whether more housing or accommodation capacity is desirable for the site. The issue is whether the rezoning and precinct relief is the most appropriate way to provide for that capacity and recognise the existing Silverstream Retreat activities, while appropriately managing servicing, flooding, stormwater and landfill-interface risks.

- 2.4. The objectives and policies support a targeted zoning and precinct response, not simply retaining the notified zoning or applying full Medium Density Residential Zone everywhere. The most appropriate approach is to enable development where suitable, retain lower-density controls where constraints remain, and require future development to address infrastructure, stormwater, flooding, access, staging and landfill-interface effects.

3. APPROPRIATE ZONING & PRECINCT

- 3.1. In my opinion, the notified zoning and precinct do not adequately recognise the established and developing role of Silverstream Retreat. The Retreat is not a conventional large-lot residential property. It is a long-established mixed-use, accommodation, residential, conference, event, and community facility on the Eastern Hutt Road key connection route between medium density zoning in Lower Hutt and special activity / industrial zoning in Upper Hutt – a linkage between two urban districts.
- 3.2. The evidence of **Mr Ross** confirms that:
- (a) The Silverstream Retreat has operated near Silverstream Landfill for approximately 36 years without known complaints being made by the Retreat about the landfill
 - (b) The site contains nine residential units and accommodation for approximately 300 guests;
 - (c) Hundreds of thousands of people have used the property over time;
 - (d) A consented development plan is now being implemented;

- (e) That development plan includes a 750-person event centre (under construction) and 200-person youth centre;
 - (f) A future stage of approximately 50 motel units is contemplated;
 - (g) Accommodation capacity may increase over time; and
 - (h) Residential development options, including a 12-lot subdivision off Kingsley Street (**Attachment 1**), an alternative 30-unit option also investigated for the area.
- 3.3. That evidence demonstrates a real, established and reasonably foreseeable development pathway. The relief is not speculative.
- 3.4. It is useful at this point to set out a key proposed Large Lot Residential Zone objective for the main area of the site comprising the Silverstream Retreat Precinct (and ancillary land):

LLRZ-O1 Purpose of the Large Lot Residential Zone

The Large Lot Residential Zone contributes to a well-functioning urban environment through managing development in residential areas with constraints that mean they are less suited to the level of density and development found in other residential areas, particularly relatively steep slopes, high levels of vegetation cover, constraints in infrastructure, and lower levels of access to commercial services and community facilities.

And a key objective of the Medium Density Residential Zone:

MRZ-O1 Purpose of the Medium Density Residential Zone

The Medium Density Residential Zone contributes to a well-functioning urban environment through the provision of predominately residential activities and housing in locations that are appropriate for medium density development.

MRZ-O2 Activities in the Medium Density Residential Zone

The Medium Density Residential Zone:

1. Predominantly provides for residential activities and housing, including housing types that support a moderate density of residential development, and

2. Provides for non-residential activities that:
 - a. Are compatible with the purpose and the planned character and planned urban built environment of the zone,
 - b. Are compatible with the amenity associated with medium density residential development anticipated by the zone, and
 - c. Support the health and wellbeing of people and communities in the surrounding area.

- 3.5. In my opinion, the site already has an established higher intensity of use, serving tens of thousands of guests, visitors, and even residents, every year. The site's evolution is on-going, with development plan implementation underway, and more contemplated. The site, in part, provides a community facility with excellent access, and while some areas are steep, so is the adjacent medium density area. This aligns better with MRZ-O1 & MRZ-O2.

- 3.6. The site is not an unserviced or constrained lot that the Large Lot Residential Zone anticipates. Rather, the site is within the urban context and supports mixed-use. It is serviced with water supply from the public main on Kingsley Street, wastewater connection to the landfill leachate main, and existing stormwater managed by discharge to drains and water courses, and any three waters or flooding constraint can likely be managed in a typical or conventional way, according to **Mr Godwin**. I accept his view.

- 3.7. I also rely on the evidence of **Mr Godwin** that servicing is not a fatal or fundamental constraint at the plan-making stage. Future development would remain subject to detailed design, staging, resource consent assessment and engineering approval processes, including assessment of water supply, wastewater, stormwater, flooding, access and firefighting requirements. In my opinion, those matters are therefore appropriately managed

through the future consenting and engineering design process, rather than by retaining the notified Large Lot Residential Zone.

- 3.8. I agree with the proposition raised by **Mr Ross** that upzoning the land is most appropriate, rather than any proposed down-zoning.

4. RESPONSE TO SECTION 42A REPORT

- 4.1. I understand that the Residential Zones section 42A report (and by cross-reference the Rural Zones section 42A report) recommends rejecting Silverstream Park Christian Centre's submission.
- 4.2. I accept that infrastructure, stormwater, flooding, water supply and landfill reverse sensitivity are relevant issues. However, in my opinion, rejection of the relief in full is not the most appropriate way to achieve the relevant Proposed District Plan objectives and the sustainable management purpose of the Act.
- 4.3. In my opinion, future upzoning enabled development can also co-exist with the landfill. The existing situation described by **Mr Ross** gives comfort. Although it is not clear, I assume that the section 42A report author's concern is mostly in relation to the proposed General Rural Zone land Sections 1–5 SO 461420 (unaddressed), which comprises hilly land at the foot of the landfill owned by Silverstream Park Christian Centre. It may assist that Large Lot Residential Zone relief is no longer sought.
- 4.4. I must also disagree with the section 42A author's reasons to not support extending the proposed precinct boundary. The concern is misplaced and proceeding with the notified extent would result in uncertainty, with unzoned land and an incomplete precinct.

- 4.5. With respect, the section 42A author is mistaken that this part of the site is within the HCC Silverstream Landfill designation, it is not. The author also comments that the precinct appears to extend over the buildings and ancillary activities associated with the Retreat, but this ignores the recently consented youth centre and overflow car parking that straddle 3 & 15 Reynolds Bach Drive and Section 2 SO 429576 (unaddressed). See **Figure 1**.
- 4.6. The comment that the areas are predominantly undeveloped and vegetated is also incorrect for similar reasons mentioned above.

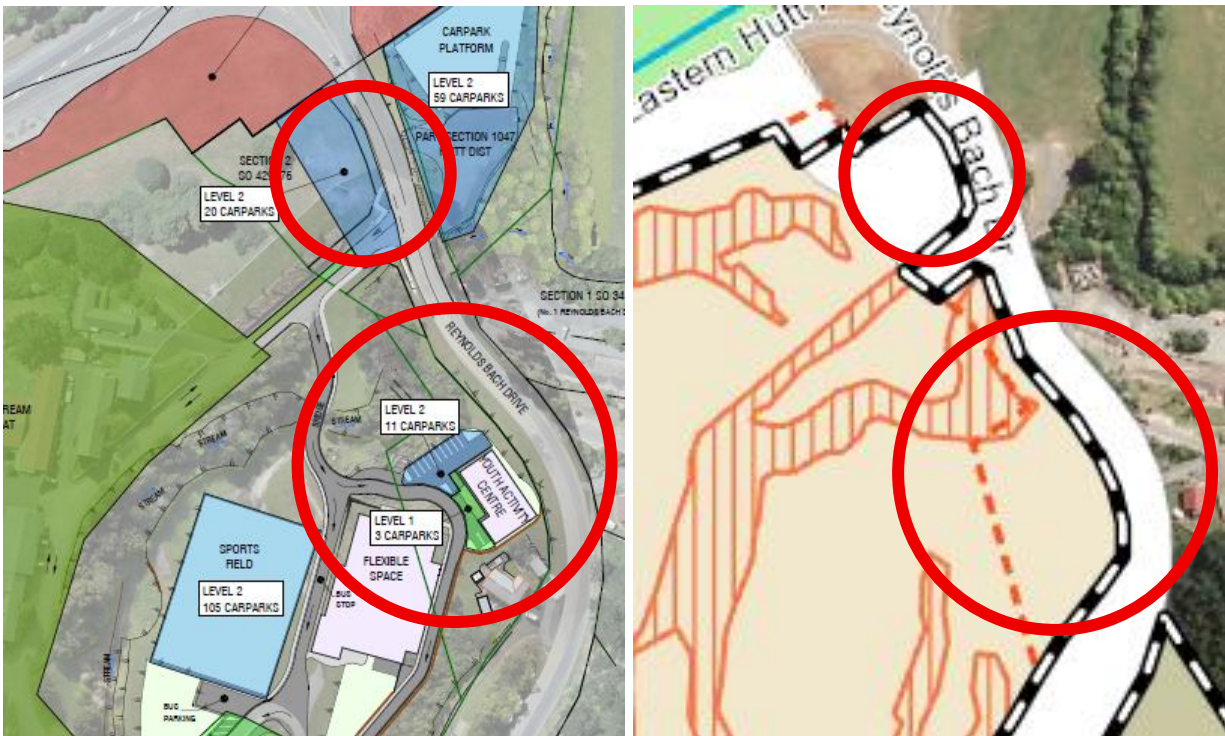


Figure 1. Development Plan detail (left) and Proposed District Plan zoning map (right). Source: Cuttriss and HCC.

5. SECTION 32AA ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. I have undertaken a further evaluation under section 32AA of the Act. In my opinion, the relief now sought in the evidence of **Mr**

Ross is the most appropriate option. That relief is to rezone the main Retreat land and the Reynolds Bach Drive / Section 2 SO 429576 land to Medium Density Residential Zone, extend the Silverstream Retreat Precinct over the consented and developing activity areas, and make consequential precinct amendments.

5.2. I have considered two options:

(a) **Option 1** — retain the notified zoning and precinct extent. This would retain Large Lot Residential Zone over the main Retreat land and leave the Silverstream Retreat Precinct boundary as notified.

(b) **Option 2** — accept the relief now sought. This would apply Medium Density Residential Zone to the main Retreat land and associated Reynolds Bach Drive / Section 2 SO 429576 land, and extend the precinct to reflect the Retreat's actual, consented, and future development areas across the site.

5.3. Option 1 is conservative and under-recognises the established scale and function of Silverstream Retreat, the consented master plan now being implemented, the event centre and youth centre under construction, existing and future residential and accommodation activities, and the site's unique urban context.

5.4. Option 2 is the most appropriate option. It better recognises the Retreat as an established and evolving accommodation, conference, event, youth, recreation and community facility. It also provides for housing and accommodation capacity in an urban-edge location and aligns the zoning and precinct framework with the site's actual and consented use.

5.5. The principal benefits of Option 2 are recognition of an established community facility, provision for future

accommodation and residential capacity, efficient use of a large landholding, better alignment between zoning and land use, and improved certainty for implementation of the consented master plan.

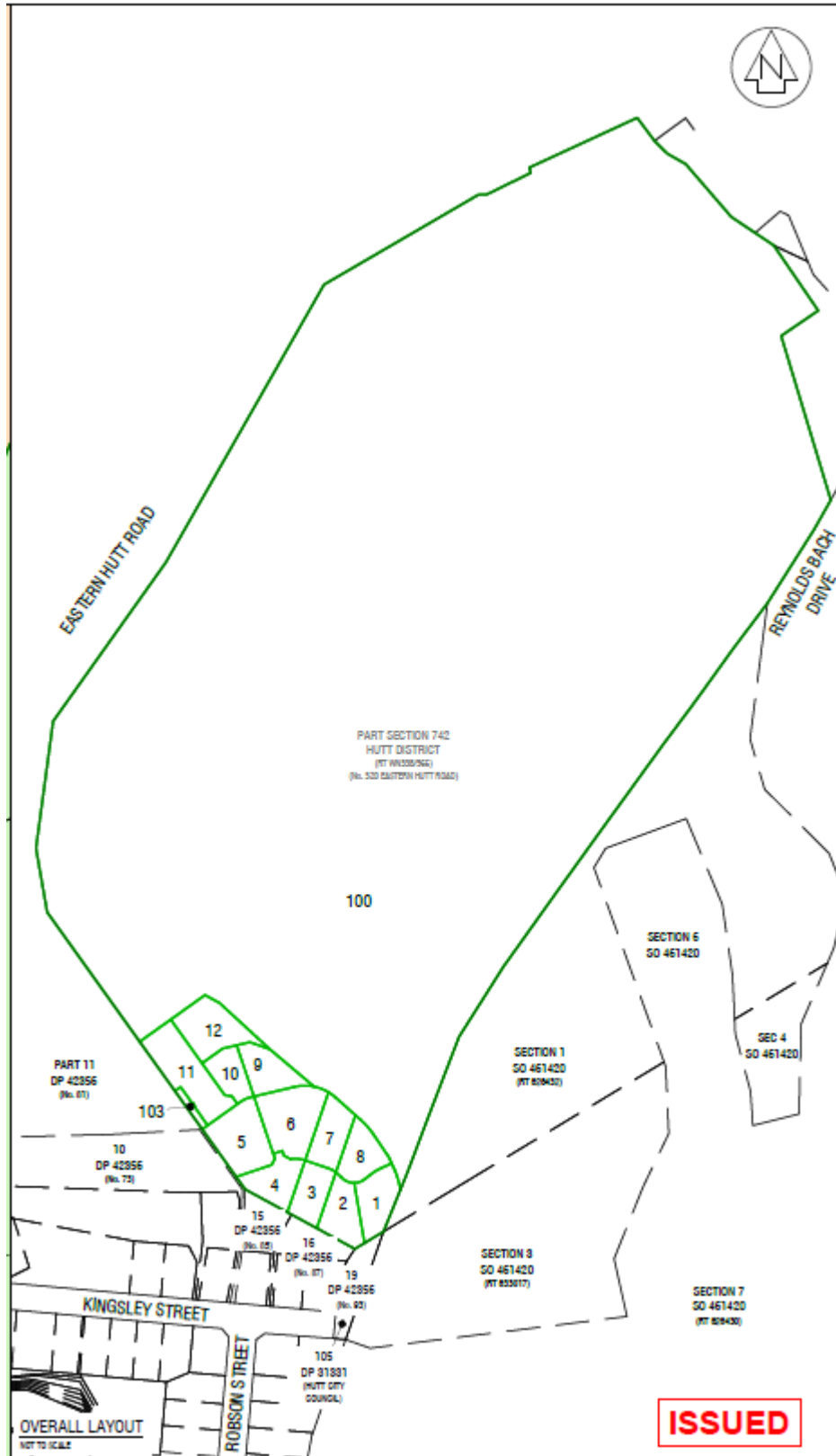
- 5.6. The principal costs are that future development may require careful assessment of servicing, stormwater, flood risk, access, amenity and landfill-interface effects. In my opinion, those costs are manageable through existing district-wide provisions, future resource consent assessment, engineering approval processes, consent conditions, staging and, if necessary, consent notices.
- 5.7. The risk of acting is acceptable. The civil engineering evidence is that servicing matters are not a fundamental constraint to rezoning and can be resolved through future design and consenting. The corporate evidence is that the existing Retreat activities have coexisted with Silverstream Landfill for decades without complaint from the Retreat.
- 5.8. The risk of not acting is greater. Retaining the notified zoning and precinct extent would fail to recognise the established and consented scale of the Retreat, create uncertainty for the Reynolds Bach Drive / Section 2 SO 429576 land, and unnecessarily constrain appropriate future accommodation and residential development.
- 5.9. Overall, the benefits of the relief sought outweigh the costs. In my opinion, the relief is more efficient and effective than the notified provisions and is the most appropriate way under section 32AA.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. I do not support the section 42A recommendation to retain the notified zoning and precinct extent unchanged. The Silverstream Retreat is an established and growing facility, with a consented development plan now under construction. An enabling planning framework should support its ongoing evolution, including future residential and accommodation aspirations across the large mixed-use site. I support the relief in the evidence of **Mr Ross**.
- 6.2. I have summarized the planning maps relief in **Attachment 2**.

Glen Cooper
Dated 5 June 2026

ATTACHMENT 1: KINGSLEY STREET SUBDIVISION



ATTACHMENT 2: PLANNING MAP RELIEF REQUESTED

