

Rolleston – Developing a Town for the Future – Intensification in a small town

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If you have passed through the small town of Rolleston, you might have seen on the side of the road a sign saying “Town of the Future”. However in recent history, Rolleston had not lived up to that slogan. Back in the 1970’s, Norman Kirk had a dream of turning the sleepy village of less than 1,000 people into a city of 80,000. Yet after a change of Government the dream was never realised and through the 80’s and early 90s growth stagnated.

But in the late 1990’s things began to change. Rolleston offered large sections which were cheaper compared to Christchurch alternatives, and provided a product people wanted to buy. Rapid growth occurred with the population moving from 1,000 to 7,500 all within the last eight years!

This growth is set to continue with another 5400 households being allocated to Rolleston over the next 35 years via Plan Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement. However, could the low density sprawl continue on an ongoing basis or would a change in housing density be required?

With this in mind, the Selwyn District Council developed a Structure Plan to strategically manage future growth. Increasing the density of housing in Rolleston from an average of 7 Households per hectare to 14 has been a key factor in developing the requirements for the town going forward. Increased housing densities will be able to support diversity in the community, meet the needs of future residents and give the town the critical mass it needs to become a self-contained mini-city.

This paper will outline reasons for intensification of housing in Rolleston and the methods that the Council intends to use to implement the Structure Plan. For example the use of Subdivision and Medium Density Guidelines and Outline Development Plans.