

File Ref: BRF-00779/FTAA-2521-1154

30 March 2026

Colin Litt
Gordon Litt Farms Limited (the applicant)
Email: s 9(2)(a)

c/- Fraser McNutt
Barer & Associates Ltd
Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Colin,

Section 28- Notice of Decisions on the referral application for the Orchard Grove project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions is for an application received from Gordon Litt Farms Limited for referral of the Orchard Grove project (project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).

Project Details

The project is to establish a new residential development over approximately 73 hectares of rural land and involves:

- a. approximately 815 residential lots
- b. a new neighbourhood centre of approximately 4,000 square metres
- c. stormwater management features, pedestrian and cycle paths, landscaped areas, and new reserves and open spaces within a connected greenspace network
- d. associated roading and three waters infrastructure; and
- e. provision for a future arterial road along the existing Reynolds Road corridor.

The project will require the proposed approvals under specified Acts:

- a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), potentially including a prohibited activity under the operative Waikato District Plan as it involves the subdivision and urban development of highly productive land.
- b. wildlife approval under the Wildlife Act 1953.

Statutory framework for referral applications

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

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Fast-track referrals are administered on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure by the Ministry for the Environment | PO Box 10362 | Wellington 6143, New Zealand | NZBN: 9429041908853

The project can only be accepted if the Minister is satisfied the criteria in section 22 is met, which includes being satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits and referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes and is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process..

Under section 21(3) of the Act, the Minister must decline a referral application if:

- the Minister is satisfied that the project does not meet the criteria in section 22
- the Minister is satisfied that the project involves an ineligible activity
- the Minister considers they do not have adequate information to inform the decision.

Additionally, the Minister has the discretion to decline a referral application for any other reason, even if the project meets the criteria outlined in section 22 of the Act.

Decision on referral application

The Minister has decided to accept the referral application for the whole project as he is satisfied it meets the criteria in section 22 (s 21(1)(c)) and to refer the project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a).

Reasons for accepting referral application

The Minister is satisfied the project:

- (a) is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits; and
- (b) referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –
 - (i) would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and
 - (ii) is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Specifically, the Minister is satisfied the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act as:

- (a) the project for a large-scale urban development is a **development project** that would have **significant regional benefits** in the Auckland region [s22(1)(a)] because it:
 - i. will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020) (s22(2)(a)(iii)) as it:
 - will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, and contribute to a well-functioning urban environment [s22(2)(a)(iii)] as it:
 - will deliver a significant increase in housing supply in Hamilton and the Waikato region including approximately 815 residential lots, with a range of densities that responds to local demand
 - includes a neighbourhood centre and public open spaces which will provide for social, economic and recreational needs of future residents

- ii. will deliver significant economic benefits (s22(2)(a)(ix)) as it:
 - will generate a one-off increase in gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately \$290 million. This includes the provision of full-time equivalent work for 206 people over a 10-year development period and, upon completion of the project, an annual spend of approximately \$60.6 million contributing to sustained employment and economic activity in the region.
- (b) referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes [s22(1)(b)(i)] because:
 - i. the project may involve a prohibited activity under the operative Waikato District Plan, which would preclude it from progressing through the standard RMA consenting pathway – prohibited activities may be considered through the fast-track approvals process
 - ii. appeals under the Act are only to the High Court rather than the Environment Court and are limited to points of law
 - iii. the Act precludes public and limited notification.
- (c) referring the project to the fast-track approvals process is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)] because the project is neither novel in the New Zealand context nor beyond the scope of what a panel would typically assess under the RMA.

The Minister is satisfied there is no reason they must decline the project under section 21(3) of the Act. The Minister is also satisfied there is no reason to decline the project under section 21(4) or (5) of the Act.

Specified matters for accepted referral application

1. Gordon Litt Farms Limited, who lodged the referral application, as the person who is authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project under section 27(2) of the Act.
2. In relation to a substantive application for the project:
 - a. a deadline for lodging the application applies under section 27(3)(b)(i) – the application must be lodged by two years from the date of issue of this letter.
 - b. The following information must be submitted with the application lodged for the project (s27(3)(b)(ii)):
 - i. an integrated transport assessment, prepared in consultation with Hamilton City Council, Waikato District Council and the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) - Waka Kotahi that:
 - assesses the effects on the surrounding transport network of both the project while it is carried out and the resulting development; and
 - contains modelling showing the effects on traffic flows and key intersections and

- identifies any upgrades/interventions to transport infrastructure that are required in connection with the subdivision and development; and
 - identifies any funding required to carry out those upgrades/interventions (including who will provide that funding); and
 - identifies how the proposed development will support people to use public transport and carry out active modes of transport, such as cycling and walking; and
 - contains information on any discussions held, and any agreements made, between the authorised person and Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council about integrated transport.
- ii. Infrastructure assessment/s which describe;
- the methods proposed to service the project with regard to stormwater, water, wastewater and,
 - any associated funding/ other arrangements to enable the completion of this project and,
 - details of discussions held with Hamilton City Council and Waikato District Council regarding the timing of the required boundary adjustment between the two authorities and how this may impact infrastructure provision.
- iii. The persons or groups from whom a panel must invite comments from in addition to any specified in section 53 (s27(3)(b)(iii):
- Hamilton City Council
 - New Zealand Transport Agency – Waka Kotahi

Other matters

1. Under section 16(2)(c) of the Act, the Minister directs any panel that considers a substantive application for the project to comply with the following:
 - (i) that any panel considering a substantive application for the project must:
 - a. have particular regard to Te Ture Whaimana;
 - b. give notice to the Waikato River Authority of the application (which may be fulfilled by an invitation to comment under section 53 of the Act);
 - c. consider the provisions for appointing hearing commissioners from the register maintained by the Waikato River Authority as they may be applied to the fast-track process;
 - d. have regard to the Waikato-Tainui Environmental Plan, including how to provide for continued partnership with Waikato-Tainui; and
 - e. consider the detailed information-sharing provisions of the following Joint management agreements (JMAs), as they may be applied to the fast-track process:
 - i. The Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato District Council Joint Management Agreement
 - ii. The Waikato Raupatu River Trust and Waikato Regional Council Joint Management Agreement.

Under section 28 of the Act, the Ministry for the Environment must also give written notice of decisions made by the Minister on an accepted referral application to the parties specified in Appendix 1 of this letter.

If you have any queries about this notice of decisions, please email to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Rebecca Burton or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537). If you have any queries about the substantive process, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz, or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Frame', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and a trailing flourish.

Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix 1: Section 28 – Notice of Minister’s decision on accepted referral application

Section 28(1)(a) – The applicant	Gordon Litt Farms Limited
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Section 28(1)(ii) – Anyone invited to comment on the application

<i>Relevant local authorities</i>	Waikato District Council Waikato Regional Council
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<i>Relevant portfolio Ministers</i>	Minister for the Environment Associate Minister of Housing Minister of Conservation
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<i>Relevant administering agencies</i>	Department of Conservation
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<i>The Māori groups under s17(d)</i>	Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust Waikato Raupatu River Trust Waikato River Authority Ngāti Wairere E Haa o te Whenua o Kirikiriroa (THaWK)
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<i>Any other persons under s17(5)</i>	Chief Executive of Hamilton City Council Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) Chief Executive of KiwiRail Minister for Regional Development Minister for Economic Growth
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Section 28(2) – Other parties for an accepted referral application

<i>The Panel Convener</i>	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
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<i>Any iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities (other than those that must be notified as identified above) that the Minister considers have an interest in the matter</i>	No additional iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities have been identified beyond those listed above.
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<i>Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)</i>	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
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<i>Relevant administering agencies</i>	As identified above.
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