



FTAA–2502–1006: Application received for referral of the Ashbourne project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Stage 1 decisions

Project Name: Ashbourne

Date submitted:	24 February 2025	Tracking #: BRF–5883	
Security level:	In-Confidence	MfE priority:	Urgent

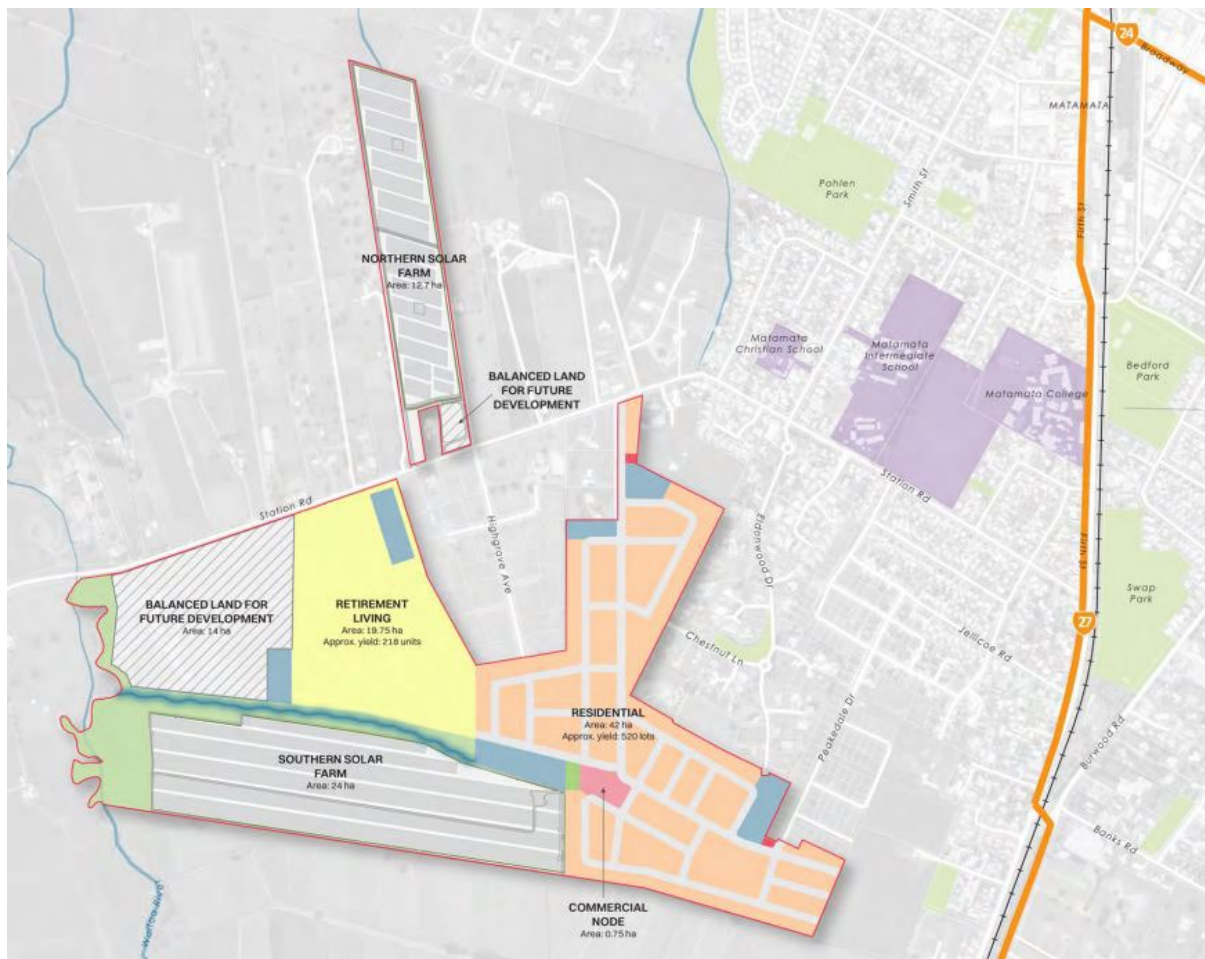
	Action sought:	Response by:
To Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure	Decisions on recommendations in Table A	To be advised

Actions for Minister's Office staff	Return the signed briefing to MfE ftareferrals@mfe.govt.nz Send attached letters (if signed)
Number of attachments: 5	Attachments: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Application documents for Ashbourne Project: (File Exchange link provided in email)2. List of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)3. Draft Letter to relevant portfolio Ministers – inviting written comments on the project4. Draft letter to other Ministers5. Statutory framework

Ministry for the Environment contacts:

Position	Name	Cell phone	1 st contact
Principal Author(s)	Max Gander-Cooper, Joanne Waitoa		
Manager	Stephanie Frame	s 9(2)(a)	✓
General Manager	Ilana Miller	s 9(2)(a)	

Project location



Key messages

1. This briefing seeks your initial decisions on an application from Matamata Development Limited to refer the Ashbourne project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. At this stage you can either decline an application for the reasons set out section 21, or you can provide the application to, and invite comments from, the parties identified in section 17. If you do not decline the application, you will receive a further briefing following receipt of comments, to support your final decision on whether to refer the project.
2. The project is to establish mixed-use development on approximately 125 hectares of land approximately 1.8 kilometres southwest of Matamata, comprising:
 - a. A residential development including approximately 520 residential units, public open space and a commercial node
 - b. A multi-functional greenway including for active transit modes and stormwater management
 - c. A retirement development including approximately 218 units, a hospital and

supporting facilities

- d. Two solar farms covering 12.7 and 24 hectares respectively, with the potential to provide up to 52,000 megaWatt-hours per year.
3. The project will require the proposed approvals:
 - a. Resource consents under the specified Act – Resource Management Act 1991.
4. We have undertaken initial analysis of the referral application and this is presented along with our considerations and recommendations in Table A below.
5. We have decided the application is complete and complies with section 14 of the Act, as the application complies with section 13 requirements, may be capable of satisfying the criteria in section 22 and does not appear to involve an ineligible activity. The applicable fee and levy has been paid.
6. We recommend you progress consideration of the referral application to the next stage of analysis (Stage 2) and invite written comments from the parties prescribed in section 17(1) of the Act being: local authorities, the Minister for the Environment and relevant portfolio Ministers, relevant administering agencies, the owners of Māori land within the project area and identified Māori groups from section 18(2) of the Act. The parties are listed in Attachment 2.
7. We recommend that you invite written comments from the following parties as additional parties under section 17(5) of the Act:
 - a. Minister for Seniors
 - b. Minister of Climate Change
 - c. Powerco Limited
 - d. New Zealand Transport Agency
 - e. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
8. We recommend that under section 20 you request further information from the applicant and relevant local authorities as detailed in Table A.

Action sought

9. Please indicate your decisions on the recommendations below in Table A.

Signature



Ilana Miller
General Manager – Delivery and Operations

Table A: Stage 1 analysis

Project details	Project Name		Applicant		Project Location	
	Ashbourne		Matamata Development Limited c/- Barker and Associates		125 hectares of land approximately 1.8 kilometres southwest of Matamata and comprised in the following records of title: Lot 4 Deposited Plan 384886 Lot 5 Deposited Plan 384886 Lot 204 Deposited Plan 535395 and Lot 25, 106 Deposited Plan 393306 Lot 2 Deposited Plan 567678 and Lot 2 Deposited Plan 21055 Lot 3 Deposited Plan South Auckland 14362 Lot 1 Deposited Plan South Auckland 65481 Lot 1 Deposited Plan 21055	
Project description	The project is to establish mixed-use development on approximately 125 hectares of land approximately 1.8 kilometres southwest of Matamata, comprising: a. A residential development including approximately 520 residential units, public open space and a commercial node b. A multi-functional greenway including for active transit modes and stormwater management c. A retirement development including approximately 218 units, a hospital and supporting facilities d. Two solar farms covering 12.7 and 24 hectares respectively, with the potential to provide up to 52,000 megaWatt-hours per year.					
Consultation undertaken	As required by s11, the applicant has consulted with:					
	Relevant local authorities	Relevant iwi authorities, hapu and Treaty settlement entities:	Relevant MACA groups	Ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou]	Relevant administering agencies	Holder of land to be exchanged
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Matamata-Piako District Council (MPDC)Waikato Regional Council (WRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ngāti HauaRaukawaNgāti Hinerangi	N/A	N/A	Ministry for the Environment	N/A
Will project help to achieve the purpose of the FTAA? [section 22 assessment criteria]						
The project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits [section 22(1)(a)]	<p><i>The project has been identified as a priority project in a central or local government, or sector plan or strategy or a central government infrastructure priority list [s22(2)(a)(i)]</i> No</p> <p><i>Will deliver new regionally or nationally significant infrastructure or enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure [s22(2)(a)(ii)]</i> No</p> <p><i>Will increase the supply of housing, address housing needs, or contribute to a well-functioning urban environment [s22(2)(a)(iii)]</i> The project includes 500 new residential units and 200 retirement units. This is approximately half of MPDC’s estimate of additional housing demand for Matamata for 2065. While this appears to be locally significant, it is not clear that the benefits are regionally or nationally significant. We recommend seeking comment from the applicant and WRC on this matter</p> <p><i>Will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)]</i> The applicant states the project will deliver economic benefits including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">increasing housing supplycatering to the aging populationeconomic benefits of constructionconstruction and ongoing employmentenabling land to be put to its best useenabling agrivoltaics <p>It is not clear that these benefits are regionally or nationally significant, we recommend you seek further information from the applicant on this matter.</p> <p><i>Will support primary industries, including aquaculture [s22(2)(a)(v)]</i> No</p> <p><i>Will support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum [s22(2)(a)(vi)]</i> No</p> <p><i>Will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions [s22(2)(a)(vii)]</i> The applicant states the project will contribute to climate change mitigation through the construction of two solar farms. It is not clear that these benefits are regionally significant. We recommend you seek further information from the applicant and the Minister of Climate Change on this matter.</p> <p><i>Will support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards [s22(2)(a)(viii)]</i> The applicant states the project’s stormwater solution takes into account climate change. This does not appear to be a regionally or nationally significant benefit.</p> <p><i>Will address significant environmental issues [s22(2)(a)(ix)]</i></p>					

	<p>No, there are no significant environmental issues to be addressed on the site.</p> <p><i>Is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies [s22(2)(a)(x)]</i></p> <p>The applicant considers the project is consistent with the Future Proof Strategy and the Matamata Piako District Plan.</p>		
referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]	<p><i>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)]</i></p> <p>The applicant considers the project would be processed more effectively by a single authority than by submitting separate applications to the district and regional councils. The fast-track process has shorter timeframes than standard RMA processes, has limited public involvement (including precluding limited and public notification) and limited rights of appeal. The applicant considers all of this would enable the project to proceed more quickly under the FTAA than the RMA.</p> <p><i>Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)]</i></p> <p>The applicant states they have a fully engaged project team who are already progressing towards a full resource consent package, hence referring this project will see the substantive application lodged in the following few months to ensure the efficient operation of the fast-track process.</p>		
referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]	N/A		
referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]	<p><i>The impact of the proposed land exchange on the person or persons responsible for managing the Crown-owned reserve</i></p> <p>N/A</p> <p><i>Compare the activity involved in the project against the current and other likely uses of the space, taking into account—</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the economic benefits and strategic importance of the proposed project; and the likely impact of the proposed project on current and proposed marine management regimes; and the environmental impacts of the competing activities. 		
Minister invites comments	<p><i>You must copy the application to, and invite written comments from [s17(1)]:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant local authorities – MPDC and WRC Minister for the Environment Relevant portfolio Ministers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister of Housing Minister for Energy Relevant administering agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry for the Environment The Māori groups identified in Appendix [2]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ngāti Haua Ngāti Hinerangi Raukawa Waikato Tainui The owners of Māori land in the project area identified in Appendix [2]: None <p>We consider the Minister of Housing and Minister of Energy are relevant portfolio Ministers because the project includes large-scale housing development and new renewable energy production.</p>	<p><i>The Minister may also copy the application to, and invite written comments from, any other person[s17(5)].</i></p> <p>We recommend you invite comments from the following additional parties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Minister for Seniors because the project includes a retirement village. The Minister of Climate Change, to confirm the applicant's assertions that the project includes climate change mitigation that would have significant regional or national benefits Powerco, because the applicant proposes to connect to their lines so the project may be reliant on their approvals New Zealand Transport Agency, as the project may affect the State Highway network The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, to test the applicant's assertion that the application would have significant regional or national benefit in terms of providing housing supply. 	<p><i>The Minister may request further information about a referral application from the applicant, the relevant local authorities, or the relevant administering agencies to be provided within the time frame specified in the request.</i></p> <p>We recommend you request the following additional information from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant: Additional information to demonstrate that the project would have significant regional or national benefits. Waikato Regional Council: Whether it considers the project will deliver housing supply which is significant regional benefit.
Recommendations			Minister's decision
a. Note that section 25 of the Act permits you to decline the referral application without inviting comments from the relevant local authorities and any relevant Ministers.			
b. Note that you have not yet provided the application to, nor sought any comments on it from, the parties listed in section 17(1) but that you are required to do so if you do not decline the application under section 21 of the Act.			
c. Note that section 17(5) of the Act permits you to forward an application to, and invite written comments from, any other person.			
d. Note that if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame you are required to consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.			
e. Note that section 20 of the Act permits you to request further information from the applicant or relevant local authorities or relevant administering agencies at any time before you decide whether to accept or decline an application.			
f. Agree to progress the Ashbourne Project to our Stage 2 analysis (invitation to comment and s 18 report stage).			Yes / No
g. Agree to provide the application to, and invite comments from:			Yes / No

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matamata Piako District Council and Waikato Regional Council under section 17(1)(a) • The Minister for the Environment and the Minister of Housing and Minister for Energy as relevant portfolio Ministers under section 17(1)(b) • The Ministry for the Environment as the relevant administering agency under section 17(1)(c) • The following treaty groups under section 17(1)(d) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ngāti Haua ○ Ngāti Hinerangi ○ Raukawa ○ Waikato 	
h. Agree to provide the application to and invite comments from the following additional entities/persons under section 17(5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minister for Seniors • The Minister of Climate Change • Powerco Limited • New Zealand Transport Agency • Ministry of Housing and Urban Development 	Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
i. Agree to seek further information from the applicant to demonstrate that the project would have significant benefits for the Waikato region and/or nationally, and from Waikato Regional Council on whether the housing benefits which the project will deliver are a significant regional benefit.	Yes / No
j. Note that you have agreed to delegate to the Secretary for the Environment your responsibility to send all correspondence other than to Ministers	
k. Sign and send the attached letters to Ministers.	Yes / No
l. Sign and send the attached letters to other Ministers	Yes / No

Signed:

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure

Date:

Attachment 2: List of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Name of group	Type of group (section of Act)
Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust	Iwi authority (s18(2)(a)); Treaty settlement entity - Ngāti Hauā Claims Settlement Act 2014 (s18(2)(a))
Raukawa Settlement Trust	Iwi authority (s18(2)(a)); Treaty settlement entity - Raukawa Claims Settlement Act 2014 (s18(2)(a))
Te Puāwaitanga o Ngāti Hinerangi Trust	Iwi authority (s18(2)(a)); Treaty settlement entity - Ngāti Hinerangi Claims Settlement Act 2021 (s18(2)(a))
Waikato-Tainui (represented by Te Whakakitenga o Waikato Incorporated)	Treaty settlement entity – current negotiation mandate for remaining Waikato-Tainui claims (s18(2)(d))

Attachment 5:

Statutory framework summary

1. You are the sole decision maker for referral applications. If you accept a referral application then the whole or part of the project will be referred to the fast-track approvals process.
2. If a Treaty settlement, the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019, a Man Whakahono ā Rohe or a joint management agreement provides for consideration of any document or procedural requirements, you must, where relevant:
 - a. Give the document the same or equivalent effect through this process as it would have under any specified Act; and
 - b. Comply with any applicable procedural requirements.
3. You must decline a referral application if:
 - a. you are satisfied the project does not meet the referral criteria in s22
 - b. you are satisfied the project involves an ineligible activity (s5)
 - c. you consider you do not have adequate information to inform your decision.
4. You may decline an application for any other reason, including those set out in s21(5) and even if the application meets the s22 referral criteria.
5. You can decline an application before or after inviting comments under s 17(1). However, if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame, you must consider them, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.
6. If you do not decline a referral application at this stage you must copy the application to, and invite written comments from:
 - a. the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment and the relevant portfolio Ministers
 - c. the following relevant administering agencies:
 - d. The Māori groups identified in Appendix 2
 - e. The owners of Māori land in the project area.
 - f. you may provide the application to and invite comments from any other person.
7. You can request further information from an applicant, any relevant local authority or any relevant administering agency at any time before you decide to decline or accept a referral application (see section 20 of the Act).
8. However, if further information has been sought and provided within the required time frame you must consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.