

Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Planning for the Future - Landuse Planning

The main matter that the Council is being asked to consider is....

- Whether or not the Council should continue with a full review and restructure of the District Plan in accordance with the timeframes and budget previously agreed by the Council.

1. Council direction

- The direction provided to staff by the Council in December 2010 was to retain existing levels of service, noting that the District Plan review is a top priority.

2. What the activity does

The Landuse Planning activity has a strong focus on the preparation, monitoring and maintenance of the District Plan. The Council's District Plan is currently being reviewed.

3. What the legislations says

The District Plan is the primary document for managing landuse and subdivision within the Thames-Coromandel District. The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) requires the Council to, at all times, have a District Plan for the District (s.73(1)).

The purpose of the preparation, implementation and administration of the District Plan is to assist Council to carry out its resource management functions in order to promote the purpose of the RMA - sustainable management of natural and physical resources within the District.

In accordance with the RMA the District Plan "must give effect to" any relevant National Policy Statement (NPS). At the current time there is an NPS on Electricity Transmission (came into effect in 2008) and a New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (came into effect in December 2010). It is known that other NPSs are currently being developed (e.g. biodiversity, urban design, flood risk, etc) and the content of these are considered when and where relevant.

The District Plan is also required to "have regard to" any relevant National Environmental Standards (NES). At the current time there are NESs on Electricity Transmission; Telecommunications Facilities; Air Quality, and; Sources of Human Drinking Water. It is known that other NESs are being developed (e.g. plantation forestry, contaminated land, future sea level rise, etc) and the content of these are considered when and where relevant.

Environment Waikato is currently reviewing its Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and released its Proposed RPS for formal submission in November 2010. The current RPS was made operative in 2000 and the review is required to address emerging resource management issues within the region and to give effect to changes to legislation. The development of an RPS is a requirement of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and an RPS provides an overview of the resource management issues of the region and outlines ways in which the integrated management of natural and physical resources will be achieved. As a result of the 2005 amendments to the RMA, Council must now 'give effect to' an RPS via the District Plan.

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4. Proposed activity objective

The proposed activity objective for the Landuse Planning activity is:

To identify and manage the land use and associated resource management issues facing the District.

NB: This objective is slightly different to the objective stated in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan, in that it is more specific.

5. How this activity currently would contribute to the Council Outcomes

The activity will contribute to the achievement of the Council Outcomes as follows:

Council Outcome	The Landuse Planning activity...
A prosperous district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides for economic and population growth that is socially and economically sustainable. • Helps create an environment that enables our economy to grow. • Provides a clear planning framework to guide future development of the district and create opportunities. • Encourages sustainable economic growth in sectors that draw on, but do not compromise, our unique natural environment including tourism, aquaculture.
A liveable district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides for a choice of lifestyle opportunities. • Promotes and protects the districts historical and cultural heritage. • Promotes and supports a local sense of place (town centres, heritage and special environment protection, urban form).
A clean and green district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balances the protection of our unique environment environmental with accessibility. • Ensures future development fits sensitively within the Coromandel's unique landscape and coastal environment. • Is part of a balanced regulatory framework that protects important community and environmental values without imposing uniformity and inflexibility. • Focuses development regulation in the areas that are important. • Provides a framework that implements and supports appropriate land use management.

The District Plan is the primary vehicle through which the Council will give effect to the Coromandel Peninsula District Blueprint: Framework for our Future. The Blueprint places expectations on the Landuse Planning Activity to attend to a wide range of requirements under the four outcomes, through a review of the District Plan. They include landscape and biodiversity protection, recognition and realisation of the desired development/settlement pattern and the protection of people, property and key infrastructure from development and from hazards.

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6. Things to be aware of

- The Government is currently considering amending the Resource Management Act which could have significant implications for the Landuse Planning activity - increased/decreased responsibilities in certain areas (e.g. urban design/planning, recognition of spatial plans, etc).
- There is also uncertainty regarding the Hauraki Treaty settlement and the implications for landuse planning (e.g. provisions in the settlement could override planning provisions in the District Plan, there may be co-governance arrangements, etc that could influence Plan provisions, Plan development, timeframes and costs, etc).
- At recent meetings of the District Plan Review Committee several Committee members raised the possibility of Council preparing non-statutory guidance and providing financial assistance (eg. to cover some of the cost of having to obtain resource consent, etc) to support and assist the owners of heritage buildings and natural heritage features in the management of their property.

7. A word from our community....

- The 2010 community prioritisation survey shows that " Having a plan and process to manage land use and subdivision" is ranked 12th out of the 27 activities surveyed.
- There are high expectations from various customer groups (e. resource users, community and environmental groups) regarding outcomes of the District Plan review. In some cases there may be conflicting customer expectations (eg. less regulation vs increased environmental protection).

8. Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats

- A strength is that there are strong community and Council expectations around the importance of the environment and the need for careful management. This means that the community and Council are mainly supportive of the need for a District Plan to manage the effects of activities on the environment.
- A strength is that there is a clear legislative and policy mandate for undertaking the activity. A potential weakness is that legislation and policy is subject to change and refinement (through NPSs, NESs the RPS, etc) which can create uncertainty, additional costs, etc.
- The weakness is that the Landuse Planning activity is often dealing with conflicting expectations which are difficult to resolve to all customers' satisfaction. Often a balance/compromise needs to be found which no body is completely happy with. Alternatively, determining the extent of various customer expectations can involve planning and legal processes/ procedures which can be very expensive.
- An opportunity is that better reporting of environmental monitoring information that has been assembled to review the current District Plan. There is an opportunity for positive environmental messages to be disseminated to the community (not all environment news needs to be bad news). This will help raise community awareness of local environmental issues.
- There are several risks associated with the District Plan Review, some of which are:
 - There is a risk the reviewed District Plan will be subject to legal challenge/litigation due to different expectations regarding the best way to achieve outcomes.

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- There is a risk that national and regional policy (e.g. the RMA/RPS) will be amended which could mean significant review of work already underway/undertaken.
- More broadly, there is a risk that there could be significant changes in governance arrangements (e.g. co-governance) which may impact upon the Landuse Planning Activity and, more specifically, delivery of a reviewed District Plan within the current time and budget parameters.

9. Proposed levels of service

Staff proposed the following levels of service for the Landuse Planning Activity.

Level of Service	This means...
There is a District Plan that is up-to-date and readily available	The District Plan rules for my property are readily available and understandable
District Plan objectives are being achieved.	Development in my community is consistent with the objectives of the District Plan.

10. How is this activity managed?

The activity is currently implemented by TCDC full time staff. The reason for this is that projects and work is often of a medium to long-term nature and there is a need for a high level of corporate knowledge, internal communications, consistent thought processes.

Where there are peaks in workload, resources are often able to be re-allocated within the team/Council (for example, through secondments, internal projects, etc). Where specialist skills or knowledge is required then external contractors and consultants can be engaged.

11. What do we currently spend on this activity?

As a proportion of Council's annual budget for the 2011/2012 year, the Landuse Planning activity represents approximately 1.36% of total spend.

2011/2012 Draft Annual Plan	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$1.38m
Capital Expenditure	n/a
Total budgeted spend for Landuse Planning for 2011/2012	\$1.38m
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 2011/2012	\$100.97m
Total percentage of budget spent on Landuse Planning	1.36%
2009-2019 Ten Year Plan	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$13.08m
Capital Expenditure	n/a
Total budgeted spend for Landuse Planning for 10 years	\$13.08m
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 10 years	\$1,295.64m
Total percentage of budget spent on Landuse Planning	1.01%

12. How this activity is funded, and why

The Landuse Planning activity is currently funded as follows:

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Funding rationale summary as outlined in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan

By providing guidelines and rules for the use of the land resource throughout the District, the District Plan provides benefits for all persons by ensuring that the developments, which occur, maintain environmental and community standards.

Funding mechanisms used for operating expenditure are:

General Rates	UAGC	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies
60-79%	20-39%			

There is no capital expenditure associated with this activity.

Staff recommend no changes to the current funding policy for the Landuse Planning activity.

13. Staff recommendation

- That the Council should continue with a full review and restructure of the District Plan in accordance with the timeframes and budget previously agreed by the Council.
- Staff recommend no changes to the current funding policy for the Landuse Planning activity.