

Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Safeguarding the Environment - Landuse Management

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

- Maintaining current levels of service for the Landuse Management activity, with a focus on improvements.

1. Council direction

The direction provided to staff by the Council in December 2010 was to:

- Retain existing levels of service (while noting that streamlining how this activity is delivered is a priority)
- Develop linkage between economic development activity in providing assistance around the regulatory and consent processes.
- Explore options for proactively working with Iwi in regard to consultation around resource consents

2. What the activity does

The Council's Landuse Management activity is principally concerned with processing resource consent applications and ensuring that developments and activities are consistent with the Council's District Plan and the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

The activity also includes monitoring resource consent conditions, investigating and resolving breaches of the District Plan and RMA, defending Resource Consent decisions in Court and providing planning advice through our "Duty Planner " service.

3. What the legislations says

The (RMA) sets the mandate for Council undertaking this activity. Council is required to achieve agreed environmental outcomes, specifically the promotion of sustainable management of the natural and physical resources. Part 2 of the RMA sets this as the main premise and starting point for any resource consent decision, plans or policy decisions.

Following this the RMA sets out the matters of national importance other matters that decisions need to recognise and provide for matters such as the preservation of natural character of coastal environment and protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes.

The recent changes to the RMA have placed an emphasis on simplifying and streamlining administrative processes. In October 2010 the discounting regulations came into force, whereby failure to meet the statutory time frames results in an automatic reduction in a proportion of the processing costs of the application.

In processing resource consents we need to pay regard to National Policy statements and National Environmental Standards (NES).

- Government has recently given effect to the NZ Coastal Policy statement, in addition to the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000. We are required to ensure that our decisions have regard to these.
- National Environmental Standards relevant to telecommunications and electricity transmission need also to be complied with.

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- Government is also developing NES on plantation forestry, contaminated land, future sea level rise to name but few. We will be need to ensure compliance with these until they are incorporated into the District Plan.

The RMA requires that Environment Waikato prepares the Regional Policy Statement (RPS). This document is required to provide an overview of the resource management issues of the region and policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resource of the whole region. Once the RPS is notified staff processing resource consents are required to give weighting to the notified RPS, depending on its progress through the statutory process.

4. Proposed activity objective

The proposed activity objective for the Landuse Management activity is:

To achieve good and agreed environmental outcomes including the sustainable management of our natural and physical resources.

NB: This is similar to, but enhanced, objective stated in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan.

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 Management activity...
A prosperous district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps provide for economic and population growth that is socially and economically sustainable. • Contributes to streamlined regulatory processes.
A liveable district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports local identities through 'place-making' (town centres, heritage and special environmental protection, urban form). Hazards such as flooding and slips are adequately avoided, mitigated or remedied.
A clean and green district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides for our unique environment to be protected by ensuring appropriate development. • Balances environmental protection with accessibility. • Implements and supports appropriate land use management. • Is part of a balanced regulatory framework that protects important community and environmental values without imposing uniformity and inflexibility.

The Coromandel Peninsula Blueprint places expectations on this Activity to direct and control development within the statutory framework provided by the District Plan, to protect landscape and natural character values and to manage development within current limits or with limited expansion of the three main hubs of Thames, Whitianga and Whangamata. The Activity is expected to control development and infrastructure provision in hazard prone areas.

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6. Things to be aware of

- One of the characteristics of this activity is that the variety of customer expectations may be different. For example an applicant wants a resource consent application to be processed as quickly and cheaply as possible, whereas the neighbour may not want the application processed at all or may want a hearing and time to consider the effects of the application. The general ratepayers expect the applications to be processed in a manner that is correct and that will not expose the council to unnecessary risk.
- It is anticipated that we will capitalise on recent good performance in this activity by maintaining and improving on outputs and streamlining processes to enable efficiency gains. For example, an electronic plan processing system is being worked on, along with better utilisation of the computer processes we have.
- As this activity sits within the Environmental Services (ES) area of the business, the activity has been part of the ES Review streamlining project. This project seeks to help streamline the processing and monitoring of resource consents. It includes significant automation of processes and ensures better and more accurate performance monitoring of the consenting and consent monitoring processes.
- The Treaty Settlements may potentially require co-management of some resource consenting processes.

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 of the 27 activities surveyed. This activity has a medium priority rating, as determined by the community, when compared to other activities of the Council.

8. Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats

- A strength is that we have well qualified and increasingly experienced team with the potential to deal with all work aspects.
- Significant gains have been made adapting to the legislative changes and being recognised as a high performance activity by external stakeholders. This is reflected by achieving compliance with current performance measures with the statutory timeframes for processing resource consents, compliance certificates for subdivisions and checking of building consents for district plan compliance.
- Whilst it is acknowledged the monitoring and investigation side of the activity needs further work (particularly regarding performance measures) the team has been effective in its duty in respect of the monitoring resource consents and investigations. There has been an increase in revenue from this aspect of the business despite a reduction in development activity. The Development stakeholders are well aware that they will be visited as part of the process.
- Staff have been seconded to other priority areas (such as District Plan Review), which benefits the organisation by ensuring that the new District Plan better "implementable" from a users perspective.
- There is an opportunity for work flows to be fine tuned and developed to increase use of technology and hence streamline systems.
- There is an opportunity to develop 'Masterplan' further, to enable a wider use of technology to improve consistency of decision making and information dissemination to improve customers services options.
- The ES services review addresses both these opportunities.

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- There is an opportunity to provide assistance and help to new businesses wanting to set up in the District, providing assistance and co-ordination to help navigate through the regulatory processes.
- There is an opportunity to review current workflows and decision processes in respect to lwi co-management.
- There is an opportunity to build on the intellectual property being developed in the Building Control activity (i.e. online consent process) and carry this through to the Landuse Management activity.

9. Proposed levels of service

The following levels of service are proposed for the Landuse Management activity:

Level of Service	This means...
To manage development to achieve agreed environmental outcome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a current level of service and is controlled by the Landuse Planning activity which sets the environmental outcomes. <p>Area for improvement and focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an opportunity to provide for implementation of co-management regimes. Possibly through including lwi representatives on hearing panels and setting environmental outcome in the District Plan review*.
All resource consents will be processed efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a current level of service delivery. We do not have an option to reduce this level of service. Recent RMA reform introduced regulations that penalise authorities that do provide this level of service.
Good, prompt advice will be delivered to help people understand the District Plan rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This level of service is provided through the duty planner service provided at Thames office, Whitianga and Whangamata Areas office and a limited appointment only service at Coromandel area office. <p>Area of improvement and focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements opportunities are available around improving our Web site, on line services (online consent tracking and Masterplan). • Further work should also be done around advocacy and compliance with conditions of the consents and the need to comply with the District Plan / RMA. • There is an opportunity is provide a link to economic development by providing assistance and help to new businesses wanting to set up in the District, providing assistance and co-ordination to help navigate through the regulatory processes. • Noting however, there may additional cost incurred with more emphasis in part of the activity. Particularly around increase levels of the assistance provided as part of the economic

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	development opportunities.
Our environment is being cared for.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The part of the activity relates to monitoring and enforcement of the RMA, District Plan and conditions of resource consents. Stakeholders have told us that this is an important part of the process, that historically very little priority was placed on this part of the activity. <p>Area for improvement and focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are opportunities to improve our performance reporting and making improvements to the way we do business. Whilst this is a current level of service delivery. Any increases to the level of service would make a significant difference and allow for more proactive work in this area.

** With regards to the direction regarding collocating with Iwi staff in Council offices to comment to resource consents, staff view is that this would be an efficient means of enabling consultation to occur with Iwi. However, this would likely be a costly project and would require a single Iwi planner to speak on behalf of all of the Coromandel Iwi. We currently provide these services through the use of technology and masterview and have an MOU with Ngati Hei and Ngati Maru. This could be developed relatively easily with other Iwi willing to enter into similar agreements.*

10. How is this activity managed?

This activity is implemented largely by TCDC staff.

11. What do we currently spend on this activity?

As a proportion of Council's annual budget for the 2011/2012 year, the Landuse Management activity represents approximately 3.44% of total spend.

2011/2012 Draft Annual Plan	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$3.48m
Capital Expenditure	n/a
Total budgeted spend for Landuse Management for 2011/2012	\$3.48m
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 2011/2012	\$100.97m
Total percentage of budget spent on Landuse Management	3.44%
2009-2019 Ten Year Plan	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$40.67m
Capital Expenditure	n/a
Total budgeted spend for Landuse Management for 10 years	\$40.67m
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 10 years	\$1,295.64m
Total percentage of budget spent on Landuse Management	3.14%

12. How this activity is funded, and why.

The Landuse Management activity is currently funded as follows:

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

It is considered that the public generally benefits from ensuring that developments occur which are in keeping with the overall intent of the District Plan and the values sought for the District's visual appearance and use of land.

The funding mechanisms used to fund operating expenditure are:

Item	General Rates	UAGC	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies
Consents	40-59%	0-19%		40-59%	
Monitoring, Enforcement, Appeals	60-79%	20-39%		0-19%	

There is no capital expenditure associated with the Landuse Planning activity.

Staff recommend no changes to the funding policy used for this activity.

13. Staff recommendation

- Staff recommend that the Council maintain existing levels of service with an improvement focus for the Landuse Management activity.
- Staff recommend no changes to the funding policy used for this activity.