

District Plan review – March 2021 Update

Meeting: Council Briefing
Date of meeting: 03 March 2021
Reporting officer: Michael Day, Strategy, Policy and Governance Manager

Purpose/Ngā whāinga

To provide an update on the District Plan review work programme, with a specific focus on the upcoming process involved with developing ‘discussion documents’, which will be the first opportunity for the community to be introduced to key issues and themes that will shape the content of the new district plan.

Context/Horopaki

The District Plan review is a significant, multi-year project, which is an opportunity to reconsider all matters contained within the Operative (2013) District Plan and to ‘test’ whether existing plan provisions are still fit for purpose and remain the most appropriate for our district. This review programme is an opportunity to ensure that the new district plan enables economic and residential growth, whilst protecting the things that make Kaipara unique and special.

At the December 2020 council briefing, staff set out the key milestones in the District Plan review journey (see **Attachment C** for key milestone update). The first step in this journey is the production (and subsequent community engagement on) of discussion documents. The intention is to engage with the community regarding the discussion documents after July 2021.

Discussion/Ngā kōrerorero

Our intention is that the (discussion documents) topics will largely follow the layout of the recently enacted (November 2019) ‘District Plan Structure’ from the National Planning Standards. This prescribes the required layout, format and structure of our next district plan, noting that it is different from the Operative District Plan. This structure is set out at **Attachment A**. The key benefit of this approach is that it provides an opportunity to (informally) introduce this new structure to the community at an early stage of the plan development process.

Briefing schedule

As there will be a lot of material to traverse during the next few months as our discussion documents take shape, staff plan to divide the topics into monthly, bite-sized ‘chunks’. The suggested schedule is as follows:

- April briefing
 - Strategic direction
 - Zones (e.g. residential, rural)
 - Subdivision
- May briefing
 - General district-wide matters (e.g. noise)
 - Energy, infrastructure and transport
 - Hazards and risks
- June briefing
 - Natural environment values (e.g. ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity)
 - Historical and cultural values (e.g. historic heritage)

- Tangata whenua values
- July briefing
 - Complete final draft of discussion documents for review.

Staff have developed a draft discussion document template (see **Attachment B**) and the intention is that each topic/chapter will be presented to Elected Members for feedback at the relevant briefing. Staff also propose to provide Elected Members with a further two weeks (following each briefing) to provide feedback. This feedback will be used to inform the final discussion documents.

District Plan review strapline

A number of councils throughout the country, as part of the process of reviewing operative district plans and preparing new ones, have chosen to 'brand' their district plan review/new district plan development process. The intention being to raise awareness of the district plan review process and to facilitate greater community interaction and involvement in the plan development process. Staff believe that our district plan review would benefit from a strapline. Two examples from other councils are set out below:



Staff from the Policy team have come up with several suggested straplines, which will be shared with Elected Members at the briefing. It is hoped to come away with consensus on the preferred strapline, which will then be used as part of the District Plan review process going forward.

Resource management system reform

On 10 February 2021, the Government announced that the resource management system will be reformed this parliamentary term. This involves repealing the Resource Management Act and enacting three new pieces of legislation:

- A Natural and Built Environments Act (NBA)
- A Strategic Planning Act, and
- A Climate Change Adaptation Act.

Cabinet has agreed to use a special process for the NBA by developing an exposure draft by May 2021 for consideration by a select committee inquiry. A bill is intended to be formally introduced into Parliament in late 2021 and passed by late 2022.

Once the new laws have passed through Parliament, there will be a transition to the new system. This process is likely to take a number of years and will include transitional provisions to ensure that the RMA as a whole remains in effect until future plans (developed under new legislation are promulgated).

At this stage, staff intend to continue with business-as-usual regarding the district plan review programme, primarily because of the current uncertainty with regards to specific details of the reform package and that it will be a number of years until we 'transition' to the new system.

Next steps/E whaiake nei

District Planning staff will have regular (monthly) briefing sessions with Elected Members between April 2021 and July 2021 as we ‘workshop’ our way through the discussion document material. Community engagement on discussion documents is likely to commence in August 2021.

Staff also intend to have further briefings/workshops with Elected Members as we learn more about the resource management system reform package. As local authorities will undoubtedly be a key stakeholder in the reform process, staff understand that the Ministry for the Environment will be setting up specific channels/forums for local government to specifically raise our collective voices.

Attachments/Ngā tapiritanga

A	National Planning Standards – District Plan Structure
B	Draft Discussion Document template
C	District Plan review key milestone update