



Report 08.62
Date 15 February 2008
File X/08/05/01

Committee Council
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Statement Review

Draft Regional Policy Statement

1. Purpose

To seek Council's approval to release the draft Regional Policy Statement for public feedback.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

The draft Regional Policy Statement is a non-statutory document. However, consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the section 82 "Principles of consultation" of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The draft Regional Policy Statement (Attachment 1) has been prepared in accordance with the Resource Management Act, 1991.

Please note that Attachment 1 is the first copy of the designed document. It is still subject to minor design changes. The content is the same as provided to Council in December, except for editorial changes.

The purpose of the Regional Policy Statement is to promote the purpose of the Act, which is sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Its role is to achieve integrated management of the region's natural and physical resources.

The Regional Policy Statement, once formally notified later this year, will have to be given effect through district and regional plans. This is a stronger requirement than in the past, when plans were required to be 'not inconsistent with' the Regional Policy Statement. The Regional Land Transport Strategy is required to be 'not inconsistent with' the Regional Policy Statement.

In addition, when local authorities in the region are deciding on resource consents and designations, they will be required to have regard to the Regional Policy Statement.

4. The review process

Regional Policy Statements are mandatory and must be reviewed every 10 years. The current Regional Policy Statement was made operative in May 1995, and the review commenced in May 2005.

The review of the Regional Policy Statement began with the release of *Measuring up, 2005*, the State of the Environment Report for the Wellington region, which reported on progress towards the objectives in the current Regional Policy Statement.

In May 2006, we released a discussion document *Our region – their future* which sought feedback on the issues the community thought needed to be addressed by the Regional Policy Statement. The discussion document was distributed widely. Feedback was also sought in response to a two page advertisement in community newspapers.

In June 2007, draft provisions (issues, objectives, policies and methods) were released for comment to city and district councils and key stakeholders. The availability of the draft provisions was also advertised on Greater Wellington's website and in 'Elements'.

In addition to the submissions that we received on the draft provisions, several city and district council's specifically requested that Greater Wellington carry out wider consultation on a full draft document before releasing a proposed document.

The release of the draft Regional Policy Statement specifically responds to this request. The draft Regional Policy Statement also provides Greater Wellington with an opportunity to present and discuss the content, gather feedback, and revise the document where necessary, prior to formal notification. Once the Regional Policy Statement is "proposed" it enters the formal statutory process of submissions, hearings, decisions and appeals. Changes can only be made to a proposed document in response to submissions. The Council can however make broader changes, if they wish, to the draft document.

5. Content of the draft Regional Policy Statement

The draft Regional Policy Statement is more targeted and than the current Regional Policy Statement. It identifies 31 regionally significant issues compared with more than 100 previously, it has 30 objectives compared to 40, and the policies and methods have been reduced from 300 to 128.

The policies in the draft Regional Policy Statement are the core of the document. There are four types of policy. They either state:

- what must be included or addressed by district and regional plans or by the Regional Land Transport Strategy;
- what matters need to be considered and given ‘particular regard’ when processing resource consents, designation or when changing/reviewing plans;
- who is responsible for controlling land use for managing biodiversity, natural hazards and hazardous substances; or
- key non-regulatory programme or activities that need to be put in place to achieve the objectives.

The draft Regional Policy Statement has a new structure. The changes make it easier for all users to quickly determine what the issues, objectives and policies are for separate resource topics (i.e. air quality, fresh water, indigenous ecosystems, etc). It then presents all the policies and methods in a format which makes it clear as to how they are to be implemented by local authorities.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of what we need to work towards to achieve sustainable management of the region’s natural and physical resources. It also includes a short description of the purpose of the Regional Policy Statement, the policy framework and cross boundary issues.

Chapter 2 provides a snapshot for each resource topic (i.e. air quality, fresh water, indigenous ecosystems, etc) of the issues addressed by the Regional Policy Statement. This is followed by tables which outline the objectives and provide a summary of the policies and methods to achieve the objectives.

Chapter 3 lists all the policies then methods, separated as follows:

- section 3.1 contains the policies that direct changes to district and regional plans or the Regional Land Transport Strategy;
- section 3.2 contains the policies that state the matters to be given particular regard when making resource management decisions;
- section 3.3 contains the policies that allocate responsibility for controlling biodiversity, natural hazards and hazardous substances;
- section 3.4 contains the policies that describe the non-regulatory actions or programs needed; and
- section 3.5 contains all the methods.

Chapter 4 outlines how the Regional Policy Statement will be monitored and lists the anticipated environmental results from implementing the policies and methods. The objectives are our long term goals, and the anticipated environmental results are our 10 year targets. They will be used as part of our six yearly state of the environment reporting.

Chapter 5 outlines the principal reasons for adopting the objectives, policies and methods.

The appendices contain information about sites of significance in the coastal environment, rivers and lakes with specific values, and the region's urban design principles.

6. How does it fit with other Greater Wellington documents?

The draft Regional Policy Statement will feed into the development of Greater Wellington's Long-term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). It is also one mechanism that will be used to implement both Greater Wellington's and city and district council LTCCP community outcomes. At a regional level it sits alongside other key strategies such as the Regional Land Transport Strategy and the Wellington Regional Strategy.

6.1 Wellington Regional Strategy

The draft Regional Policy Statement plays an important role in implementing the Wellington Regional Strategy focus area of 'Investment in good regional form'.

The policies that address 'regional form' were developed through workshops (during 2006) with staff from the region's city and district councils.

The draft Regional Policy Statement does not set urban limits (as has been done in regions such as Auckland, Bay of Plenty and Canterbury). The draft however provides strong policy direction to maintain and enhance a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form, it however leaves the detail as to how this is specially carried out to district and city councils.

6.2 Regional Land Transport Strategy

The Regional Policy Statement is an important policy tool to integrate the management of land use and transportation as district plans need to give effect to it and the Regional Land Transport Strategy needs to be not inconsistent.

The draft Regional Policy Statement therefore requires the Regional Land Transport Strategy to include transport policies to maintain and enhance a compact, well design and sustainable regional form. It also directs district councils, when making resource management decisions (resource consents, designations, etc) to have particular regard to the Regional Land Transport Strategy key outcomes.

7. Communication

The consultation period for the draft Regional Policy Statement will commence on 10 March 2008 and close on 16 May 2008.

A communication plan has been prepared, and the following is a brief outline of key elements in the communication plan.

7.1 Community newspaper spread

There will be a double page newspaper spread in community newspapers on the week commencing 10 March. This will raise awareness of the draft Regional Policy Statement and let people know where they can find more information.

The advertisement will run in the community newspapers as follows:

Publication	Date
Kapiti Observer	Monday 10 March
Hutt News	Tuesday 11 March
Kapi Mana	Tuesday 11 March
Upper Hutt Leader	Wednesday 12 March
Wairarapa News	Wednesday 12 March
The Wellingtonian	Thursday 13 March

7.2 Regional Policy Statement review newsletter

A newsletter (Regional Policy Statement review Newsletter No. 4) will be sent to a wide range of organisations and people on 10 March. The newsletter will discuss the role of a Regional Policy Statement, the content of the draft and let people know how they can request a copy.

A newsletters will be enclosed with all copies of the draft Regional Policy Statement that are sent out, and bundles will be sent to information desks at all city and district councils and libraries.

7.3 Draft document

The draft Regional Policy Statement will be sent to chief executives, policy staff and councillors at each of the city and district councils. Full copies will also be sent to Ara Tahī representatives and a wide range of interested parties.

The document will be freely available to any person who requests a copy.

7.4 Web site

Electronic copies of the document will be available on the web site www.gw.govt.nz/rps. The site will also contain all the background information and reports that have been prepared as part of the review process.

7.5 Information to city and district councillors

A letter will be sent from the Chair to each mayor following this meeting (copies can also be distributed to all city and district councillors). The letter

will inform them of the upcoming release of the draft Regional Policy Statement.

Copies of the full draft Regional Policy Statement and the newsletter will then be sent to all city and district council councillors on 10 March.

Arrangements are also being made so discussion between Greater Wellington and the region's city and district council elected representatives can occur during the consultation period.

8. Process from here

Feedback on the draft Regional Policy Statement will be recorded and considered at Council workshops. At the workshops, Councillors will make any necessary changes and confirm content for the proposed Regional Policy Statement. Once content has been confirmed, the proposed Regional Policy Statement will be publicly notified. Formal hearings will take place after submissions and further submissions have been received.

9. Recommendations

That the Council:

1. ***Receives** the report.*
2. ***Notes** the content of the report.*
3. ***Approves** the release of the draft Regional Policy Statement for public feedback.*
4. ***Notes** that the consultation period will occur between 10 March and 16 May 2008.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: First designed layout of the Draft Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region