

27. MONITORING

27.1 STATUTORY REQUIREMENT TO MONITOR AND REPORT

The Council has a duty under the RMA to gather information, monitor and keep records on resource management matters. Performing these duties will enable the Council to evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of the content of the District Plan, and to provide an indication of the performance of the District Plan.

Section 35 of the RMA lists the monitoring requirements for local authorities and as a result, the Council is to undertake the following different types of monitoring:

- The state of the whole or any part of the environment of the District to the extent that it is appropriate to enable the Council to effectively carry out its function under the RMA.
- The efficiency and effectiveness of policies, rules, or other methods in this District Plan.
- The exercise of any functions, powers or duties delegated or transferred by the Council.
- The exercise of resource consents that have effect in the District.

The Council is required to report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the District Plan at five yearly intervals. This type of monitoring is often combined with State of the Environment Monitoring to give an overall understanding of how well the District Plan is working.

27.2 MONITORING PROGRAMME

In response to these statutory requirements, the monitoring programme that will be carried out by the Council is based on the following matters:

- Monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of the District Plan as it manages current and emerging resource management issues.
- Monitoring compliance with the District Plan and resource consent conditions. Monitoring the Council's internal processes and delegations to ensure they are efficient and effective.
- Monitoring the state of the urban and rural environments of the district.
- Monitoring relevant legislation changes, proposed national policy statements, proposed national environmental standards, proposed regional policy and plan changes, and proposed cross-boundary district plan provisions.

The collection and analysis of information to carry out the monitoring programme will be integrated as each type and subject of monitoring helps inform another. These monitoring expectations are detailed below.

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27.2.1 Plan Efficiency and Effectiveness Monitoring

Plan efficiency and effectiveness monitoring is a key step in the overall planning process. This type of monitoring reviews whether the objectives, policies, methods and rules are resulting in the environmental outcomes sought. The collective results of monitoring are important and contribute to an understanding of the District Plan and what improvements need to be initiated through Council lead plan changes or reviews.

Section 79 of the RMA requires the Council to have commenced a review of a provision in the District Plan, if the provision has not been a subject of a proposed plan, a review, or a change by the Council during the previous 10 years. The Council is required to report on plan efficiency and effectiveness monitoring every five years.

The plan efficiency and effectiveness monitoring programme will be determined on an annual basis, according to the results of Compliance Monitoring, State of the Environment Monitoring, legislation and policy monitoring, and a review of the emerging issues. Aside from the outputs of the other types of monitoring there are key actions required for the Plan Efficiency and Effectiveness Monitoring, and these will involve:

- (i) The progressive review of the Anticipated Environmental Results against the results recorded in the state of the environment monitoring;
- (ii) Review a range of land use and subdivision consent decisions (notified and non-notified) determined by the Council, Boards of Inquiry and the Environment Court, to understand how effective the provisions were to reach a determination.
- (iii) Workshops with consent and compliance staff and other regular District Plan users outside of the Council (e.g. surveyors and architects) to understand key administration issues.
- (iv) Review of national and regional level policy documents to understand the implications for the District Plan and potential changes necessary to ensure statutory documents are given effect too.
- (v) Review the consent applications where there was significant public opinion expressed through submissions and the matters raised by individuals and organisations.

27.2.2 Compliance Monitoring

This section relates to the degree to which new land use, development, or subdivision complies with the District Plan and/or resource consent conditions.

This type of monitoring enables feedback on how well the permitted activity standards are to administer. Monitoring the impact of permitted activities on the environment provides a snapshot of the appropriateness of the permitted thresholds. This information and analysis is important for both efficiency and effectiveness and state of the environment reporting and informs decision making on future Council plan changes.

Monitoring consent conditions is intended to determine whether the conditions issued on resource consents have been set at an appropriate level. Are the conditions necessary and reasonable to achieve the outcomes sought, are they enforceable, do they enable relevant information to be collected from the consent holder.

The Compliance Monitoring programme will be undertaken throughout the year and will be based on random checking of compliance, regular follow up action on resource consents, as well through responding to public complaints and enquiries.

Compliance Monitoring will involve:

- (i) Monitoring the compliance with relevant permitted activity standards for a range of permitted buildings and activities.
- (ii) Monitoring the compliance of conditions of resource consent.
- (iii) Monitoring the performance of District Plan administration against statutory timeframes.
- (iv) Monitoring overall compliance with the Plan with respect to activities where:
 - complaints are received and keeping a record of the number and frequency of complaint and type of activity or building generating the complaints; and
 - any unauthorised activities reported; and
 - any abatement and infringement notices issued and the type of follow-up procedures undertaken; and
 - the findings of routine observations and inspections by staff; and
 - records kept in response to conditions that require self-monitoring by a consent holder and where Council approval is required to satisfy conditions.

27.2.3 State of the Environment Monitoring

The first State of the Environment Report for the Horowhenua District was prepared and published in 2001. The state of the environment (SoE) monitoring that provided the information and analysis for the 2001 report was based on the Pressure-State-Response framework, as adopted by the Ministry for the Environment. The reporting was linked to the Council's first District Plan under the RMA and based on the following nine key topics:

- Water
- Natural Features
- Rural Environment
- Urban Environment
- Coastal Environment

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- Cultural and Heritage Values
- Open Space
- Natural Hazards
- Transport

Each topic has a series of monitoring indicators and the 2001 report provides a synopsis on each.

In 2006 the Council produced a targeted SoE Report on subdivision and development. A key aim of this report was to focus on the urban rural and coastal environments and to document the change since 2001 as a result of subdivision and development. This SoE report generated additional monitoring indicators relating specifically to subdivision and associated development in rural and urban environments.

The 2001 and 2006 topics are still relevant for future SoE monitoring and reporting. In addition SoE monitoring on the topics listed below are also important:

- Energy Provision and Transmission
- Utilities Provision and Coverage
- Reverse Sensitivity (the management of the interface of different zones, and the proximity between industry, infrastructure and sensitivity activities).

SoE monitoring requires an ongoing collection of information so that trends can be established and analysed and should refer to the indicators established in the 2001 and 2006 SoE reports to guide information and data collection.

Future SoE reports will provide the snapshot in time and give an account of the environment as it is against the 2001 and 2006 baseline.

Recording and compiling the following information would assist in future SoE Monitoring:

- Recording land use and subdivision consent information (date, the non-compliance(s), activity status, notification, decision).
- Analyse the urban and rural development trends on an annual basis using information from Building Consent applications.
- Maintaining the Council's Geographic Information System with up-to-date information.
- Aerial photography at regular intervals to visually and accurately record change over time.
- Maintain a complaints register that follows the investigation process and resolution.

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27.2.4 Legislation and Policy Monitoring

As part of monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of the District Plan there is a continual need to keep abreast of legislative changes to the RMA, national policy statements and environmental standards, to monitor proposed changes to the regional policy statements or plans, as well as proposed changes to district plans that may have cross boundary implications. The Council has an obligation to give effect to any operative National Policy Statements and Regional Policy Statements.

Legislation and Policy Monitoring could involve:

- The analysis of notified Regional and District Plans, and proposed changes to Regional Policy statements and Regional and District Plans.
- The analysis of proposed National Policy Statements and National Environmental Standards.
- The preparation and lodgement of submissions in response to draft or proposed national, regional or district policy/plan documents, sent out for public consultation pursuant to Schedule 1 of the RMA. This process will enable Council to monitor and keep abreast of potential changes in the RMA policy framework and respond to new or changing resource management issues that affect the District.
- The review of applicable new land use planning methods and emerging case law relevant to the District context.
- Liaison with other district councils to learn from their experience where applicable for the Horowhenua context.

27.2.5 Emerging Issues Monitoring

The District Plan is a 'living' document and must reflect current and emerging resource management issues so land use planning can be effective. The District Plan reflects the significant resource management issues of the Horowhenua District and an understanding of land use trends and the external influences (environmental, economic, social and technological) are necessary. The timeframe for collating information and trends is likely to differ

Emerging Issue Monitoring could involve:

- Meeting with rural and urban industry representatives and infrastructure providers on an annual basis to discuss issues and trends;
- The analysis of national and regional state of the environment reporting.
- Collating and reviewing submissions on the Council's Long Term Plan and Annual Plan processes which relate to resource management issues.
- Use statistics and trends from census data to provide an overall understanding of the population.
- Monitoring changes and improvements in the technology and practices used by different activities.

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27.3 THE MONITORING STRATEGY AND REPORTING

A five yearly report on the District Plan efficiency and effectiveness is a statutory requirement under the RMA. The outcome of the monitoring programme will ensure that the analysis and reporting can be achieved.

A Monitoring Strategy will be prepared in the near future, and then every three years (or every year) after that, a District Plan Monitoring Report will be produced. It is envisaged that the District Plan Monitoring Report will be a summary document. Research undertaken specifically in order to monitor the performance of the District Plan will either be referenced in the report or attached as appendices to the report.

27.4 CONCLUSIONS

The RMA contains an obligation to monitor and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the District Plan. The monitoring programme outlined above is intended to ensure that this responsibility is met.

The different types of monitoring are integrated and all provide information that enables the analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of the district plan policies, methods and rules. It may be that the Council is unable to carry out the entire monitoring approach every year, but will need to carry out the high priority tasks. Monitoring priorities and resources would be determined through the Council's Long Term Plan / Annual Plan processes.

There are variable timeframes and regularity over the monitoring approach. For example, the level of legislation and policy monitoring will vary from year to year depending on the release of statutory documents from the Government or Horizons Regional Council. Conversely, compliance monitoring on consents and responding to public enquiries and complaints is an ongoing requirement for the Council, as is the recording of consent information and the maintenance of a complaints register.