



What to expect at an Auckland Council Plan Change hearing

Plan Change (PC) Hearings:

PC hearings are held when a change to the Unitary Plan is proposed and submissions have been received on the proposal. A Plan Change can be instigated by the Council or by a request made by a person, group or organisation (known as a Private Plan Change). A hearing panel is appointed to hear from the submitters (and applicant if it is a private PC) and then make a decision on the proposal. A hearing panel can be made up of independent commissioners, elected representatives and members of the Independent Maori Statutory Board. The panel try to make hearings as informal as possible but also need to adhere to specific rules to ensure that the decisions made are robust and legal.

Attending a hearing:

- If you are a submitter, you will be invited to attend the hearing
- You will be asked to let us know if you wish to speak at the hearing
- You can bring along witnesses who can support your submission
- Your submission will have already been read by the hearing panel so you do not need to read this out – just expand on your key points and/or provide supporting evidence.

Hearings are open to the public so anyone, including media, can come along and observe local democracy in action. You can view all scheduled hearings [here](#).

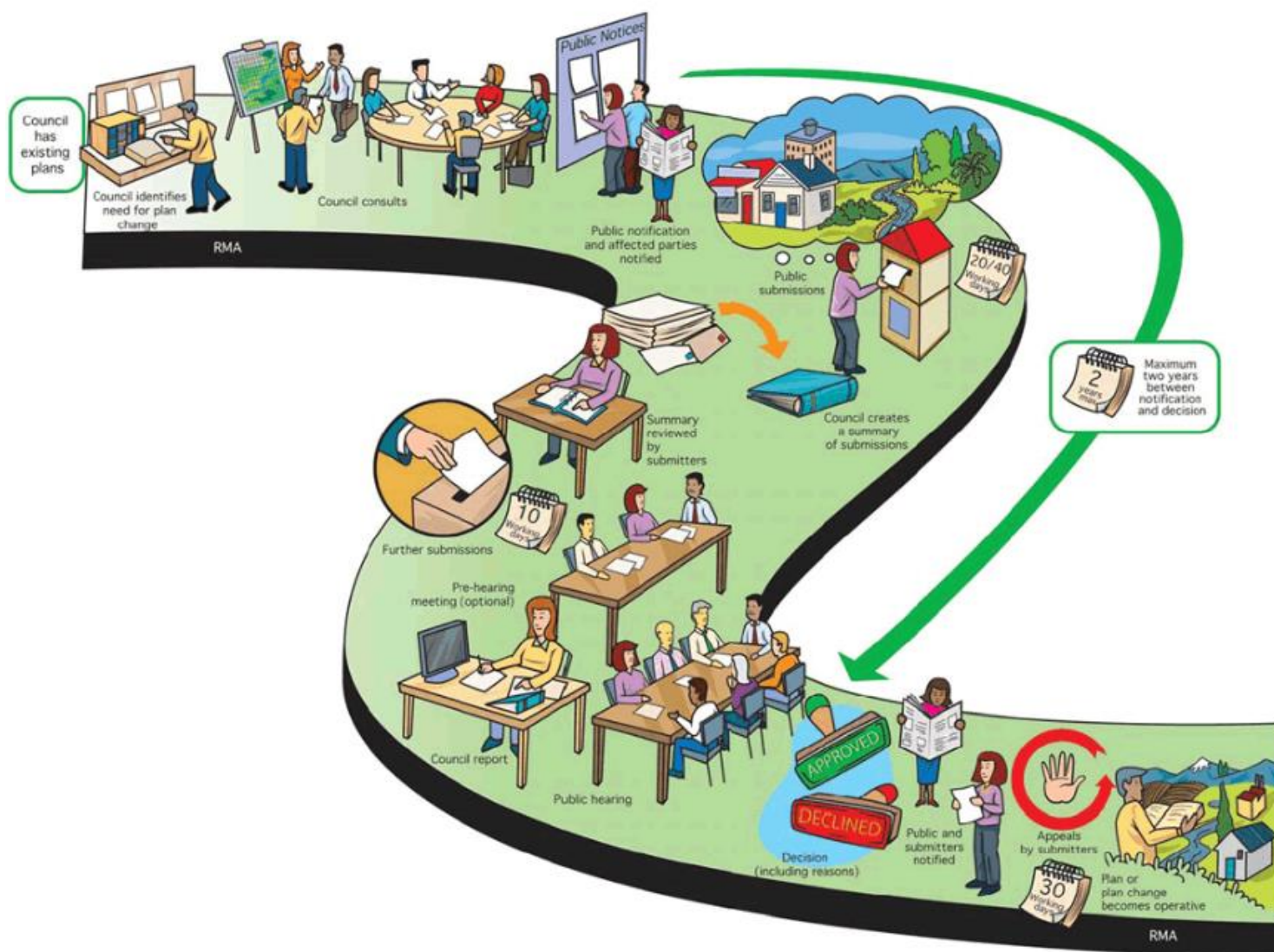
Roles at hearings:

- **Chairperson:** runs the hearing and you must follow the chair's directions
- **Panel members:** along with the chairperson, are the decision-makers
- **Hearing advisor:** advises on correct hearing processes, supports the hearing and is your point of contact
- **Applicant** (private PC): will generally have a team supporting them including expert witnesses and a lawyer
- **Council planning staff:** present their report and may also have technical experts supporting them
- **Submitter/s:** give their views on the proposal and may also bring along experts to support them
- **Local Board:** can give comments on the proposal as part of the Auckland Council co-governance model.

Generally, there is no cross-examination allowed (questioning of a witness or party by other parties). Any questions need to be directed to the chairperson who will either ask the question of other parties or decline the question.

Order of proceedings:

The inside cover of the hearing agenda, when available, will detail the order of proceedings on the day of the hearing, while the diagram below gives an overview of the plan change process – noting this is for a public (Council) plan change.



Additional information:

- Ministry for the Environment's *Appearing at a hearing about a proposed plan or resource consent*: <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/appearing-at-a-hearing-about-a-proposed-plan-or-resource-consent/>
- Quality Planning: <https://www.qualityplanning.org.nz/node/873>