

AUCKLAND UNITARY PLAN

Report To: Unitary Plan Political Working Party

Report Name: Issues and approaches for rural and coastal areas

Executive summary

There are 12 key issues facing rural and coastal areas within Auckland:

1. Water quality and quantity
2. Sustainability of natural resources
3. Character and amenity values
4. Managing population growth in rural and coastal areas
5. Reverse sensitivity
6. Diversification of land uses
7. Protection of heritage values including biodiversity and the protection and enhancement of natural features
8. Living in rural and coastal areas
9. Recreational use of rural and coastal areas
10. Economic sustainability of rural and coastal areas
11. Regionally significant infrastructure located in rural and coastal areas
12. Sustainable management of the coastal environment

There are overlaps between these topics and between the rural and coastal work stream and other work streams. Issues being addressed in other workstreams are applicable to the management of rural areas and the rural and urban coastal environment. Issues papers to be considered by the Political Working Party will focus on these matters in more detail. Most of the issues covered by the various workstreams are identified in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010. This contains national priorities and policy directions for the management of the coastal environment, which the Unitary Plan must implement. In some circumstances the national policy is very prescriptive on what should be done.

This report focuses on the priority issues for rural and coastal areas, including the urban coastal environment, that have a clear rural and coastal focus. It also recommends broad approaches for addressing the identified issues. The report does not address the full range of resource management issues associated with each topic. Rather it concentrates on the priority issues which warrant the most attention within the timeframe set for the development of the unitary plan.

Many of these key issues arise because of the need to manage Auckland growth. Intensification of development within existing metropolitan urban limits, and containing the expansion of existing and future rural and coastal settlements in the Auckland region, are major determinants of outcomes for both the rural and coastal environments.

1 Urban Growth Management

The priority issues for urban growth management are:

1. The Auckland Plan's growth management strategy as it applies to the growth of rural and coastal towns and settlements.

2. The Auckland Plan's strategy for rural areas and in particular the approach to the provision of any greenbelt and the management of rural subdivision in general and countryside living in particular.
3. The Auckland Plan's identification of rural and coastal towns and settlements that will accommodate future growth demands will affect the physical form of the settlement and the surrounding rural and coastal land and water.

The recommended approaches for addressing the urban growth management issues are:

1. Give effect to the Auckland Plan by identifying the hierarchy of rural and coastal towns and settlements listed to grow and those where growth will be limited and apply appropriate zones to the growth areas.
2. Work in conjunction with Auckland Plan to identify options for accommodating this growth in terms of location, type and scale of development of each rural and coastal town or settlement and provide appropriate zonings in and around the towns and settlements.
3. Manage the effects of town and settlement growth on rural and coastal natural values such as natural character, outstanding natural landscapes, biodiversity values.
4. Identify and manage implications of coastal town and settlement growth on adjacent coastal marine area.
5. Ensure that rural and coastal towns and settlement strategy also gives effect to NZCPS 2010.

Council needs to respond to these 12 key issues by developing a statutory framework that deals with urban growth management through objectives, policies, rules, and direct action for:

- rural and coastal subdivision and development
- rural production
- non-production activities in rural and coastal areas
- aggregate and other mineral resources
- natural character and the coastal environment, including urban coastlines
- the coastal marine area
- integration of land and water management

These matters are summarised below.

Rural and Coastal Subdivision and Development

The priority issues for existing and future rural and coastal subdivision and development are:

1. There are a large number of existing subdivided lots many of which are relatively small and have the potential to accommodate a house or other significant non rural activities. How this "latent potential" of small lots is managed affects the implementation of the urban growth management strategy, rural production options, and the natural values and character of rural and coastal areas.
2. There is continued pressure in rural and coastal areas for subdivision for rural residential purposes. Greatest demand occurs in the coastal environment. If realised, this demand can adversely affect natural character, outstanding natural landscape quality and biodiversity values. Legacy plans use a number of management tools to manage this

demand, to minimise the individual and collective adverse effects, and to achieve environmental benefits. They have had varying degrees of success.

3. Countryside living zones have been the preferred way of managing rural residential demand. Their location, amenity values, capacity to accommodate further growth, and their role as greenbelts need to be reviewed.
4. Subdivision of land normally carries with it the right to build on the new lot created. This right has been integral with the New Zealand planning system for many years. Options for dealing with land development separate from subdivision control require investigation.

The recommended approaches for addressing existing and future subdivision and development issues are:

1. Ensure the unitary plan gives effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 and specifically demonstrates this in the summary section 32 report.
2. Update understanding of existing land tenure pattern to confirm number and pattern of small lots in rural and coastal areas.
3. Investigate options for separating the subdivision of land from the use of the land and from the establishment of dwellings.
4. Investigate options for strengthening rural production by having subdivision provisions that focus on primary production and environmental gain, rather than rural residential living.
5. Review the effectiveness of bush protection or environmental enhancement subdivision. Evaluate whether the outcomes of enhancement planting or land retirement have been satisfactory.
6. Develop a more integrated and consistent system of transferrable development rights (TDRs), to encourage new subdivision to locate in preferred, identified areas.
7. Subject to Auckland Plan directions, provide for countryside living in identified areas, and discourage scattered countryside living in other rural and coastal areas.
8. Review role of countryside living areas as greenbelts for urban Auckland.
9. Identify areas of high natural character, and discourage more intensive development, or significant land modification, in these areas.
10. Provide a policy and rule framework that identifies what is "appropriate subdivision and development" in appropriate locations (siting and density of buildings, earthworks, access, coastal set-backs).

Rural Production

The priority issues for rural production are:

1. The range and quantity of rural production occurring in the Auckland region is not well recognised.
2. High quality soils provide ongoing rural productivity, but their protection for this purpose has been removed from the RMA.

The recommended approaches for addressing the issues are:

1. Giving effect to the Auckland Plan's directions for rural and coastal production activities.
2. Ensuring the Unitary Plan recognises and provides for existing and likely future rural production activities.

3. Addressing coastal production activities such as aquaculture as part of the Unitary Plan variation incorporating the regional coastal plan.
4. Identifying high quality soils and determining the appropriate approach to their management, including whether primacy should be given to their use for primary production and how this should be best achieved.

Non-production activities in rural and coastal areas

The priority issue for non-production activities in rural and coastal areas is:

1. Rural and coastal areas are used for a range of activities that do not relate directly to primary production. Some activities provide rural services, and need to be located in a rural area. Other activities are based on the natural resources of rural and coastal areas (e.g. tourism activities), or require extensive land areas to deal with reverse sensitivity issues. Other activities seek a rural location to reduce land costs, but their operation may be more closely linked to urban areas.

The recommended approaches for addressing the issue are:

1. Review numbers and location of non-production activities in rural areas, and distinguish between those activities that need a rural or coastal location, and those which should be located in urban areas.
2. Identify areas where greater opportunities for non-production activities would be appropriate.

Access to sand, aggregate and other minerals in rural and coastal areas

The priority issues for the management of aggregate and other minerals in rural and coastal areas are:

1. Demand for minerals (especially aggregate and sand) will continue to increase. The Auckland region cannot meet its current demand for aggregates from within the region. A long term strategic view is needed on how best to provide for Auckland's future aggregate and mineral requirements, and how demand can be met when it exceeds regional supply.
2. Development of new mineral resources or significant expansion of existing extraction areas can give rise to conflicts with other rural and coastal activities, (e.g. countryside living) or increase environmental concerns (e.g. off - shore sand extraction).
3. Reverse sensitivity effects where existing quarry and extraction activities are compromised by incompatible land uses locating near them that subsequently seek to restrict extraction activities because of adverse effects on the environmental or local amenity values.
4. Management of quarries and sand extraction activities in terms of their on and off-site impacts, including effects on rural and coastal transport systems.

The recommended approaches for addressing the issues are:

1. Investigate the practicability of identifying existing and future mineral resources on land, with the intent of protecting access to these resources from reverse sensitivity effects.
2. Provide a consistent approach to the management of existing quarries, that addresses both the adverse effects of quarries and reverse sensitivity land use issues.

Natural Character and the Coastal Environment

The priority issues for maintaining and enhancing the natural character of the coastal environment are:

1. Minimising the effects of inappropriate uses and development.
2. Defining the purpose of the coastal environment and how the important aspects of its natural and amenity values can be maintained or protected.

The recommended approaches for addressing the issues are:

1. Ensure the unitary plan gives effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 and specifically demonstrates this in the summary section 32 report.
2. Identify which land is within the coastal environment.
3. Identify which locations are suitable for development, and the appropriate parameters for development.
4. Identify and protect important vegetation.

Identify landscapes that should not be modified. Develop a regulatory framework that will achieve the desired conservation outcomes.

Coastal Marine Area

The priority issues for managing the coastal marine area (CMA) are:

1. Managing the CMA requires a different approach from managing land.
2. Coastal water quality needs to be maintained.
3. Information relating to marine ecosystem values (including its vulnerability and risk) is limited, and needs to be expanded.

The recommended approaches for addressing the issues are:

1. Another paper discusses whether the coastal marine area should be included in the unitary plan when it is notified.
2. Further study will more comprehensively identify areas of significant marine habitat value.
3. Marine spatial planning could assist in the updating of identified coastal protection areas and the siting of other infrastructure and commercial marine uses.

Cross boundary issues

The priority issues for cross-boundary issues are:

1. Better strategic integration between the work of Auckland Council and its adjoining regional councils is required to ensure more effective management of land and water.
2. Clearer policy linkages are required to manage activities across Mean High Water Springs.

The recommended approaches for addressing the issues are:

1. Continue to support existing organisations (Hauraki Gulf Forum and Kaipara Harbour Management Group).
2. Co-ordination between regions in relation to land and water management particularly if there is a risk that water quality within Auckland might be degraded.
3. Include strategic and integrative coastal environment objectives and policies in the Unitary Plan, but leave the detailed rules and development controls for activities in the coastal marine area to the review of the regional coastal plan.

Other Significant Workstreams affecting rural and coastal areas

Issues to be detailed in other papers which are particularly relevant to the rural and coastal workstream include:

- water quality degradation from the discharge of land generated contaminants into freshwater and into the coastal marine area. (Natural Environment Issues paper)
- management of biodiversity, natural and cultural heritage items and areas, outstanding natural landscapes and Maori relationships within rural areas and the coast.
- provision for and protection of infrastructure and network utilities, including renewal electricity generation.
- Provision for and management of open space, including public access to and along the coastal marine area
- the type of development provided for in rural and coastal towns and settlements

Opportunities for innovation

The unitary plan could include the following innovations:

- Providing a different type of linkage between the ownership of a title and the right to develop it (and in particular, the right to build a house on it).
- Better land subdivision provisions to ensure that where subdivision occurs, there is also some environmental gain.
- Providing more effective management tools for retaining and enhancing indigenous vegetation through special subdivision or development rights.
- Providing more effective management tools for transferring rural titles into areas where growth can better be managed.
- Providing better integration between regional council functions for CMA management Auckland and adjoining regions.
- Providing better integration of district and regional functions across Mean High Water Springs boundary.

Conclusion and recommendation

This report has identified the priority issues and broad approaches recommended for the rural and coastal workstream of the unitary plan. There is considerable overlap between these topics. The issues and approaches have been summarised in the executive summary at the beginning of this report.

This report recommends:

That the issues and broad approaches be confirmed to enable further work to be undertaken.

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9 August 2011

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Introduction

This paper is one of six main issue papers providing guidance for the development of Auckland's Unitary Plan relating to rural and coastal areas. The focus is on a discussion of priority higher level issues rather than being a comprehensive summary of all matters to be addressed in relation to the rural and coastal environment. This is because:

- Issues relevant to rural and coastal areas may also be relevant to other parts of the region. Hence they are addressed in other issues papers to come to the Political Working Party. For example, issues relating to the growth of existing settlements, the development and redevelopment of residential and commercial areas, the provision of infrastructure, the management of landscape values, natural and cultural heritage, water quality and quantity and Maori views are significant resource management issues across the region, and are not confined to rural or coastal areas.
- The legislation and national policy statements have clear policy directives that the Unitary Plan is required to give effect to. These matters identified by these documents are therefore taken as givens, although there is some flexibility in the means of addressing them.
- At the time of preparing this issues paper, the Political Working Party had not made its final decision on the future of the regional coastal plan. It has requested further information on the resource requirements to review and notify the coastal plan as part of the initial release of the Unitary Plan. If required, a separate issues paper can be prepared to address matters to be dealt with in the regional coastal plan.

Rural and coastal areas, and the coastline itself, are significant physical and cultural components of the Auckland region and its natural environment, identity and character. They are important contributors to the region's environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing. The coastal environment includes the coastal marine area (CMA), the area of coastal water from mean high water springs (MHWS) seaward to the edge of territorial sea (12 nautical mile limit), and the area of land adjoining MHWS associated with the coast and extending inland for varying distances. The inland boundary of the coastal environment is not defined in the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

While this paper focuses mainly on rural and coastal rural areas outside the Metropolitan Urban Limits, it also addresses the management of the coastal environment in urban areas. Rural and coastal areas include both the mainland and the islands of the Auckland Council region.

Plan Change 6 to the Auckland Regional Policy Statement provides a useful summary statement of the characteristics of the rural and coastal parts of the region:

The Auckland Region's rural economy reflects the presence of New Zealand's largest market. Although it has only 2% of the country's land area, the Region has 8% of the nation's land in horticulture. The rural parts of the Region also include other rural activities, for example, intensive animal keeping in buildings and some protected crops, that may not always be dependent upon the productive quality of the land, but which nevertheless contribute to the regional and national economy. Commercial forestry is also an important rural land use activity with over 56,000 ha planted as at 2003.

Auckland possesses some particularly defining features which provide a unique setting and are a valuable resource. These include:

The diverse coastal environment which ranges from developed urban coastlines to sheltered estuaries, harbours and bays to rugged landforms. The coastal setting gives Auckland a distinctive character and the coast is valued for its role in the area's history, culture, landscape, ecology, amenity, recreation, tourism and economy.

The islands of the Hauraki Gulf comprise significant natural and physical resources in terms of favourable location and climate, outstanding landscape features and unusual ecological balance.

The rolling green landscapes to the North and the South of urban Auckland, delineating urban from rural, and containing high quality soils and horticultural activities. These defining natural resources make an important contribution to creating the regions unique character. These natural resources require careful management to sustain and protect them from inappropriate development.

The environment beyond Auckland's Metropolitan Urban Limits displays varying characteristics and supports diverse landuse. The rural and coastal settlements define a pattern of development explicitly linked by geographical association with urban Auckland, but also provide vibrant communities in their own right. Rural and coastal settlements vary in size and function, but maintain local communities of interest and lifestyle choice.

The settlement pattern is also reflective of the natural and physical elements that further define the character of particular parts of the region. Parts of rural Auckland support large traditional pastoral and arable based activities, while others support more intensive arable based activities to create unique landscapes. Other activities have established in rural areas such as mineral extraction and aerodromes due to their requirement of a rural location.

This vision of the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy is that the diversity and well-being of people and communities living in the Auckland region will continue to prosper in a sustainable manner which:

- *Promotes strong, supportive communities:*
- *Ensures a high quality living environment*
- *Creates a region that is easy to get around; and*
- *Protects the coast and its surrounding natural environment.*

In the past residential growth was accommodated in the suburban areas of Manukau, North Shore and Waitakere. More recently, areas such as Rodney and Franklin have experienced rapid population growth. However, the supply of relatively low-cost flat land for mass housing projects within the metropolitan limits is now almost used up. As a result, it can be anticipated that there will be greater interest in redeveloping the existing urban area as well as ongoing pressures to expand the metropolitan limits to accommodate more urban expansion. Accommodating future growth predominantly through continual expansion is unsustainable and contrary to the Regional Growth Strategy.

The Auckland local government reorganisation provides an opportunity to:

- bring together district and regional planning functions in one RMA document;
- adopt a strategic approach to matters that were previously addressed in separate plans;
- improve consistency between district and regional issues identified in legacy plans; and
- ensure there is a robust and consistent methodology for assessing the significance of and priority given to each issue;

2 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS RELEVANT TO RURAL AND COASTAL AREAS

The following statutory requirements are relevant to rural and coastal areas:

Resource Management Act 1991
Biosecurity Act 1993
Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO)
Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 (HGMPA)
Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008
Waste Minimisation Act 2008
Aquaculture Legislation Amendment Bill (No 3) May 2011
Marine and Coastal Area Act 2011

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010
National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011:
National Policy Statement for Electricity Generation 2011
National Policy Statement for Electricity Transmission XXX
Proposed National Policy Statement on Biodiversity 2011

National Environmental Standards for:

- Air Quality
- Sources of Human Drinking Water
- Telecommunication Facilities
- Electricity Transmission

3 ISSUES SPECIFIC TO THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

The coast has been a significant focus for planning and resource management legislation since 1973, and has been the subject of considerable litigation as the interpretation of legislation and plans made under it has been clarified. The 1991 enactment of the RMA brought the coastal marine area and the air above it into the same management framework as the land. The Unitary Plan will need to provide strong direction in the way it addresses issues relating specifically to coastal land and the coastal marine area because:

- 1 The coast is currently and has historically been important to the environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing of the Auckland region.
- 2 The strategic direction and growth management directives of the Auckland Plan and their subsequent implementation through all aspects of the Unitary Plan determine the critical outcomes for the coastal environment.
- 3 The RMA envisages integrated management of air, land and sea in the coastal environment, both within the region and between regions.
- 4 Management of the coastal environment is not determined solely by what is in the “coastal chapter” of the Unitary Plan, but is a cross plan matter.
- 6 The majority of adverse impacts on the coastal environment arise from land based activities, rather than those actually occurring in the coastal marine area. These effects are greatest in the nearshore parts of the coastal marine area. In the more remote areas, adverse effects arise from activities generated in the coastal marine area itself and in particular sand extraction, aquaculture and fishing activities.
- 7 Significant adverse impacts on the coastal marine area arise from activities that are outside the direct control of the RMA e.g. commercial fishing, marine disposal, vessel movement effects on marine mammals.
- 8 The coastal environment is particularly important to Maori. The Marine and Coastal Area Act 2011 changes the “ownership” status of the foreshore and seabed. The impact of this new legislation and other decisions relating to the resolution of Treaty of Waitangi increase the need for a better partnership approach to plan preparation between the Council and Auckland Tangata Whenua.

Minimum contents of the Unitary Plan relating to coastal issues

In the long term the coastal environment component of the Unitary Plan will need:

- 1 Issue statements, objectives and policies relating to the integrated management of the coastal environment at a regional level.
- 2 Objectives, policies, rules and maps relating to the landward component of the coastal environment;
- 3 Objectives, policies, rules and maps relating to the coastal marine area (the regional coastal plan component).

A paper was presented to the 11 August meeting of Political Working Party recommending that the Auckland Regional Coastal Plan not be included in the initial notification of the

Comment [D1]: Any need to explain up front that this is the longer term view and does not mean this all (ie no. 3) necessarily has to happen in first notified version (as you subsequently explain further below)?

Unitary Plan in 2013. The Working Party requested further information on the resource requirements necessary to combine the regional coastal plan into the initial Unitary Plan notification. This paper does not address issues that are predominantly matters for the regional coastal plan. Its focus is on regional policy level and district plan initiatives.

4.0 OVERLAPS BETWEEN RURAL AND COASTAL AREA PLANNING AND OTHER WORK STREAMS

The rural and coastal areas work streams focus on rural areas and the rural and urban coastal environment. However there is considerable overlap with other resource or topic based work. The following topics are important for the management of rural and coastal areas, but discussion of the key issues relating to these topics and any recommended approaches to their management are detailed in the other relevant issues papers.

- Earthworks and other sediment generating activities arising from the development of rural land for urban purposes, sediment discharges from forest harvesting and other primary production activities and provision of significant infrastructure and activities such as quarries in rural and coastal areas. (Natural Environment issues paper)
- The management of land based contaminants entering freshwater lakes, rivers, streams and aquifers and their environmental, economic, social and cultural impacts. (Natural Environment issues paper)
- The management of existing and future water allocation to ensure sufficient and equitable water availability to protect instream values and provide for water demands. (Natural Environment issues paper)
- The identification of areas and the management of indigenous biodiversity, including pest and weed control. The focus of this workstream is on terrestrial biodiversity. (Natural Environment issues paper)
- Housing (in villages, visually significant locations)
- Retailing and commerce (in villages, rural based and non-rural based retailing and commerce)
- Industry (rural industries, non-rural industries)
- Design (built character, sustainable design)
- Infrastructure (vehicle access, parking and loading, transport and land use integration, location and scale of urban growth and development, traffic generation, reverse sensitivity, providing/promoting/managing modes of transport, rural transport issues, network classification and management)
- Designations (rolling over of existing designations, new designations, policy approach)
- Energy (network utilities, renewable electricity generation, greenhouse gas)
- Climate change (determining effects, response)
- Network utilities (recognising protecting regionally and nationally significant infrastructure, region-wide rules, future demand, new technology)
- Heritage – built, cultural, landscape, trees, sites of geological significance and outstanding natural features (identification and mapping, thematic review, consultation strategy)

- Treaty of Waitangi (Maori land, Treaty settlement land, Crown land, application of principles, iwi management plans, traditional land use, involvement in plan preparation, mapping sites of significance, consultation)
- Open space (categories, 'greenbelt', co-governance)
- Recreation (access to land for recreation, use of rural land for recreational pursuits, halls, community centres)
- Social policy, community development.

3.2

4 DISCUSSION OF SIGNIFICANT ISSUES RELATING TO RURAL AND COASTAL AREAS

3.1 Background

This paper defines an issue as being an existing or potential problem requiring resolution, or a particular resource to be managed in order to promote the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). In the Auckland Council region, resource management issues affecting rural and coastal areas principally arise from the ongoing population growth in the region and the requirements to accommodate this growth and to deal with the resultant social, economic, cultural and environment effects.

4.1 Managing Urban Growth in Rural and Coastal Areas

Accommodating residential, commercial and business growth within the region needs to be managed to:

- Implement the important components of Council's strategies for urban containment, including the Auckland Plan and for the use, development or protection of rural and coastal areas; and
- Take advantage of new social, cultural and economic development opportunities associated with urban growth and related activities in rural and coastal areas;
- Avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse environmental effects.
- Implement national policy directions, particularly those relating to the management of freshwater resources in rural areas and the coastal environment

The management of urban growth has three aspects in terms of rural and coastal areas. These are:

- 1 Accommodating growth in specified rural and coastal towns and settlements. This includes identifying rural and coastal settlement where there will be little or no growth due to environmental constraints.
- 2 Accommodating growth on the urban fringe through changes to the metropolitan urban limits or their Auckland Plan replacement.
- 3 Reviewing the role, form and location of countryside living areas, particularly those that abut the current metropolitan urban limits or existing rural and coastal towns and settlements.

Decisions to be made on the form and location of future urban growth within the region are critical determinants of the outcomes to be achieved for Auckland's coastal environment. The Auckland Plan will establish the high level strategic direction for the management of metropolitan urban growth and the role of coastal settlements. For example, if the Auckland Plan identifies growth along the coast as part of its southern growth opportunity area, this will need to be reflected in the Unitary Plan, and incorporate appropriate safeguards.

It is anticipated that the Auckland Plan will identify a hierarchy of rural and coastal settlements and the relative roles of each settlement. These may range from coastal service towns such as Snells Beach, to residential settlements (Omaha, Maraetai), through to small bach residential and dormitory villages (Huia, Whangateau). The Unitary Plan will need to reflect their different forms and functions, including identifying potential environmental constraints, such as high natural character and natural landscape values or the presence of coastal hazards or potential sea level rise that may exclude particular areas from expansion. Consideration will also need to be given to development in the adjacent coastal marine area,

to complement land based urban activities (e.g. new boat ramps) and the provision of open space and public walking access, all matter identified for consideration by the NZCPS.

Details relating to the residential, commercial and industrial form of coastal (and rural) settlements will be addressed by the built environment workstream. This work focuses on the appropriate types of development controls for coastal settlements, e.g. building height, neighbourhood character.

Explanation:

The ability to provide capacity to meet the demands of population growth should be considered in the context of the existing settlement pattern within the District and the proximity and influence of the Auckland metropolitan area that creates much of the demand.

Some fully serviced towns and villages can accommodate further growth.

Many other towns and villages have limited ability to absorb further growth without substantial investment in infrastructure including water supply, wastewater disposal, stormwater collection and disposal, and roading.

Some villages can absorb growth through providing self-sufficient, larger lots, on their periphery. These will need to be comprehensively planned and at an appropriate scale.

This demand for countryside living in rural and coastal areas creates a unique tension between those relying on the productive capability of the land and those who, for a variety of reasons, elect to reside in the rural areas. Often the 'rural' amenity and environment that is attributable to primary production, is also valued by those who wish to live outside an urban environment. The demand for such rural living can in turn undermine the viability of primary production activities and erode the amenity and environmental qualities that make the rural area an attractive place in which to live.

Pursuit of this 'rural' lifestyle for its own sake (rather than in association with rural production) leads to fragmentation of rural titles (rural sprawl). This can also lead to demands by landowners for road upgrading, and urban-standard services such as water supply and wastewater reticulation.

It also leads to larger numbers of people becoming reliant solely on private transport to and from their urban workplaces (compared with rural use of the land). This will place more demands on the road network.

The central issue is ensuring that sustainable opportunities are provided to accommodate the region's continuing growth, while managing its natural and physical environment. This includes the need to provide for the wide range of established activities that rely on the resources of the region, encouraging the maintenance and enhancement of its rural and coastal character, and natural environmental values.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

Provide a framework for assessing how best to accommodate growth in settlements.

Zoning settlements to:

- Classify settlements in a hierarchy of about five types, ranging from those that are fully serviced and have capacity to grow, to those that are small, remote, and have little if any capacity to grow;

- Direct public investment in infrastructure into those settlements where growth can be accommodated and where there will be sufficient public benefit to justify it;
- Direct private investment in infrastructure into those settlements where growth can be accommodated but where public benefit does not justify public investment in infrastructure;
- Require Structure Plans for growth areas.

Significant Issue 1: Water quality and quantity

Land and water management practices can cause streams, rivers, lakes, and groundwater to become degraded or obstructed by culverting, piping and channelisation with consequent adverse effects on hydrology, water quality, and riparian and aquatic ecosystems (freshwater and coastal). This is the subject of a specific paper on the natural environment (air, land, and water).

Ongoing discharges of contaminants from urban and rural land have the most significant impact on the water quality and the ecological health and species diversity of the coastal marine area. The most effective management techniques are those that prevent or reduce sediment, nutrients and heavy metals discharging into the coastal marine area in the first place. Hence priority should be given to managing contaminants on land. However appropriate actions can involve considerable capital expenditure and may require a long term fix.

Explanation:

The coastal marine area is the major receiving environment for litter, sediment, chemicals, heavy metals and other discharges generated on land. They enter the coastal marine area via non point source discharges - direct runoff from land and into freshwater streams, and point source discharges, of which urban stormwater discharges is the most significant.

Initial urban development is characterised by a predominance of sediment discharges from bare land, but as development proceeds and impervious cover expands, sediment contamination is replaced by oils, chemicals and heavy metals such as copper, lead and zinc. The most significant contributor of oil and heavy metals such as copper is the road network which largely discharges without treatment into the stormwater network. Other urban contaminants arise from waste water overflows and site specific spills.

Comment [D2]: Check this with Matthew Davis, I thought the ARC analysis showed that major zinc source was from degrading galvanised roofs??

Best on site sediment control technology and practices are shown to achieve a maximum efficiency of about 70 percent and all practices risk failure during extreme weather events. Hence the total avoidance of sediment discharges into the coastal marine area arising from new urban development is not possible. The adverse effects of sediment discharges from land are highest in low energy environments where sediment deposits and accumulates, which predominate on the east coast estuaries and in the upper reaches of the three main harbours. Methods to control contaminant discharges from roads and other impervious surfaces particularly through stormwater treatment in existing urban areas have physical constraints and are extremely expensive. Better options are available to manage stormwater discharges in new urban development areas and in the redevelopment of brownfield sites, as there is land available to implement low impact urban design methods (eg use of swales and stormwater retention ponds).

Comment [D3]: Mention that significant 'brownfields' redevelopment also provides similar opportunities?

Waste water overflows from combined sewerage-stormwater pipes result in localised pollution events and are some of the main causes of beach closures. Combined systems occur in the older urbanised parts of metropolitan Auckland, such as the Auckland isthmus. Capital expenditure by legacy councils (and now Watercare Services) to separate wastewater and sewage has been the main method for achieving environmental improvements.

Comment [D4]: Separated systems like on north shore can also lead to beach closures due to cross connections, leaks, overflows etc

In rural and coastal areas, sediment and nutrient discharges from pastoral, forestry, or horticultural land uses are the main contributors to coastal marine water quality and sedimentation levels. Where rural and coastal catchments are extensively forested by indigenous and exotic vegetation, the adjoining coastal marine water quality and ecology is generally high. Harvesting of exotic forests can give rise to increased sediment discharges. However the on-going contributor to coastal marine area water quality degradation in rural areas is agricultural production activities, particularly stock access in streams which produces sediment, waste discharges and physical damage, general land erosion. The application of fertilisers can also increase nutrient levels in fresh and coastal water.

The Natural Environment Issues paper provides:

- more detail on these contaminant discharge issues;
- potential Unitary Plan approaches to manage freshwater quality;
- the requirements of the new National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management, including the classification of freshwater.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

Another issue paper discusses water issues, and how the unitary plan should address them.

Significant Issue 2: Sustainability of natural resources

Natural resources must be managed sustainably (section 5, the purpose of the RMA). This can require Council to intervene to regulate how natural resources are used.

Explanation

Natural resource use is fundamental to rural and coastal activities. Sustainable natural resource use relates (but is not limited) to the following:

- a. Maintaining rural land principally for rural use.
- b. Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of soils, especially high quality/versatile soils, by preventing their loss through fragmentation of titles, being covered by buildings (other than glasshouses), erosion, overproduction, contamination, and other similar circumstances.
- c. Preventing water quality from becoming degraded, such as through land drainage, pollution, or sedimentation. Encouraging the maintenance and enhancement of riparian habitat.
- d. Maintaining access to aggregates and mineral resources (especially quarries), and ensuring that aggregate extraction is not hindered or halted by third-party opposition (reverse sensitivity).
- e. Maintaining the potential for hydro and tidal power and wind power to contribute to electricity generation.
- f. Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, and protecting and enhancing natural features including:
 - i. Maintaining existing indigenous vegetation, flora and fauna.
 - ii. Providing opportunities for (and supporting those who carry out) enhancement of indigenous vegetation, flora and fauna.
- g. Ensuring water supply catchments continue to remain protected from pollution or the adverse effects of land clearance, pest or weed infestation.
- h. Preventing soil erosion.

There are extensive resources of mineral deposits. Mineral potential has been identified and mapped, and the locations and quantities of these resources suggest that there are opportunities for the long-term extraction of the main industrial minerals. This is necessary to meet the demands of the Region and the future growth of Auckland.

Existing district plans have quarry and special zones for mineral extraction and processing. Management tools in the unitary plan will need to take into account the need to protect many of these resources and to provide buffers to preserve amenity and deal with potential land-use conflicts.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

The prosperity of rural areas depends on continuing access to and use of natural resources. However, in order to ensure that the use of natural resources is carried out sustainably, it is essential to set some parameters to that use. The strategy will ensure that:

- Appropriate access to the natural resources is maintained, and
- The adverse effects of resource use are managed appropriately;

by:

- Using management areas, zones and overlays to identify appropriate areas for general agricultural, horticultural and forestry production, mixed rural uses, rural residential uses, and mineral extraction;
- Identifying significant cultural and natural heritage resources and using regulatory and non-regulatory methods to protect and enhance these;

- Promote the use of non-regulatory provisions to improve regional biodiversity, landscape and other natural heritage values;
- Recognising the opportunities to promote sustainable rural land use and the maintenance of environmental quality, including water quality, biodiversity, cultural and natural heritage;
- Enabling the use of rural land for sustainable primary production. This may require changes to some land management practices. However, it is likely that those changes will result in a higher quality environment through better natural and cultural heritage management, providing opportunities for improved rural quality, and consequent economic opportunities such as tourism and adding value to primary produce;
- Limiting the subdivision of rural land for countryside living other than in identified areas;
- Providing incentives for transferrable rural lot rights, to reduce the latent (residential) potential of rural land;
- Providing opportunities for small scale low intensity non-agricultural rural businesses;
- Carrying forward the existing mineral extraction zones within management areas, providing opportunities for resource consents with threshold limits for extraction and processing, and to recognising the value of small farm quarries producing material for use on-site;
- Discourage land management practices that adversely affect soil versatility and productivity.

Adopting these rural strategies will achieve the following outcomes:

- Land remains available for sustainable primary production and sustainable rural-related activities;
- The rural landscape and rural character of productive areas remain typical of a working rural environment;
- Ecosystems, biodiversity, and wildlife corridors are strengthened or enhanced;
- Allotments used principally for residential use (i.e. countryside living) are located close to urban areas or rural towns and villages, and not on highly productive land.

These strategies will need to be supported by strategies that will result in:

- The spread of urban Auckland being contained;
- The provision of adequate infrastructure to support rural areas;
- Rural resources remaining accessible for reasonable use;
- Areas of high natural character, and outstanding natural landscapes and features, being protected;
- Historic heritage being protected or conserved;
- Indigenous biodiversity being protected and enhanced;
- Improved water quality and availability, and soil conservation;
- Activities in flood prone areas or areas subject to natural hazards adapting to the hazard;

- The opportunity for rural activities to have a reasonable discharge of contaminants to air;
- Reasonable access to minerals being safeguarded, and the adverse effects of mineral extraction being adequately managed.

Significant Issue 3: Character and amenity values

Inappropriate use and modification of rural and coastal areas can degrade its character and amenity values.

Decisions on the role of coastal areas of the region will determine the character of the coastal environment, and the extent to which its natural and amenity values are maintained or protected.

Explanation:

Many factors combine to contribute to the character of the (non-urban) rural and coastal parts of the region. Attributes that can contribute to rural and coastal character include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The dominance in the landscape of significant areas of land in dynamic primary production including pasture, crops, forestry or indigenous vegetation; and with significant ecological networks;
- The absence or subservience of manmade structures other than those related to rural production and related activities;
- A high ratio of open space relative to the built environment;
- Noises, smells, dust and effects associated with the use of rural land for a wide range of agricultural, horticultural, forestry and mineral extraction and processing purposes;
- Low population densities relative to urban areas.

While the rural landscape is constantly evolving and changing, if the key characteristics above are maintained, then rural and coastal areas will retain their “rural character”.

Rural and coastal landscapes can visually be altered by structures and buildings such as greenhouses and pack-houses. However these are recognised as important components of primary production activities, form part of the “rural” environment, and are generally considered rural in appearance and value.

Landscape issues relate to people’s values and perceptions and are subjective. However, there are certain landscape principles that can be applied, and can form an impartial basis for managing development and land uses. The region’s landscape has been assessed and mapped. The landscape units and landscape values that have been identified show the capacity to accommodate change. In some areas, such as where there are large forest areas, there is little if any capacity to accommodate change.

The coastal environment forms an edge component of the wider rural area of the region. It is characterised by its natural character values, has the largest percentage of outstanding natural landscapes in the region, and is important for its terrestrial and marine biodiversity values.

It is also an important recreational resource, particularly along the coastal edge. Providing and enhancing public access to and along this coastal marine area is a national directive.

The presence of three significant harbours, publicly owned islands and sheltered waters provide a wide range of recreational opportunities.

Both urban and rural parts of the coastal environment are attractive living environments, this being reflected by the premier realty prices and the on-going demand for coastal subdivision.

Important components that will determine the role of rural and coastal areas are:

1. The future of the metropolitan urban limits or their alternative as a planning tool to manage urban expansion – this is likely to be addressed in the Auckland Plan;
2. Management of the existing pool of subdivided small lots in coastal rural areas and the type of development allowed on these lots – refer to rural issues paper
3. Provision for any new countryside living (small lot subdivision) in and along the coastal environment – refer to rural issues paper
4. The role of rural and coastal areas for economic activities not necessarily directly derived from primary production, such as tourism – refer to rural issues paper
5. The identification of areas of high natural character and outstanding natural landscapes and areas of coastal and marine biodiversity and the level of use, development or protection accorded to these areas. – refer to rural issues and natural environment and heritage, cultural and community issues papers for discussion of landscape and biodiversity matters.

Two coastal environment-specific issues that relate to the whole region, but are particularly relevant in rural and coastal areas are:

- 1 Setting the inland boundary for the coastal environment.

An important decision to be made in the development of the Unitary Plan is the best means of identifying the coastal environment. Policy 1 of the NZCPS lists the natural, physical and elements that comprise the coastal environment. It acknowledges that the extent and characteristics of the coastal environment vary from locality to locality and the issues that arise may have different effects in different localities.

The national directive provides flexibility to the Unitary Plan as to how it should deal with defining the coastal environment. It may have a criteria based approach, using the NZCPS criteria, or it may delineate a line on a map. First generation plans focused on the use of criteria for defining the coastal environment. More recent reviews (eg Franklin District Plan) mapped the coastal environment. There are advantages and disadvantages of having a defined line versus using criteria.

An initial coastal environment boundary has been identified for the whole region as part of work done by the previous Auckland Regional Council to identify areas of high natural character. It is proposed that this line be reviewed and field checked, prior to a final decision being recommended on whether incorporate a defined coastal environment boundary into the Unitary Plan. This approach also affects the coastal environment in urban areas.

- 2 Management approaches in coastal areas of high natural character.

NZCPS Policy 13 provides direction on how the natural character of the coastal environment should be preserved and what matters constitutes natural character. The national policy requires that the Unitary Plan identify at a minimum areas of high natural character by mapping or other means.

Areas of high natural character in the coastal environment and around the margins of significant lakes and rivers have been mapped at a regional level as part of the draft 2010 review of the Regional Policy Statement. This information has been used by the Auckland Plan. It is proposed that this high natural character map form the basis of the natural character provisions in the Unitary Plan. Areas of high natural character often overlap with areas of Outstanding Natural Landscape and Outstanding Natural Features. A preferred policy approach is to establish a cascading hierarchy of

protection, with the most restrictive plan provisions applying to those locations which are both areas of high natural character and outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes. Where areas are identified for either their natural character or their landscape/natural feature values, the policy approach would focus on protecting these different elements. A more relaxed and permissive approach would apply to areas that don't have high natural character, landscape or natural feature values. This approach is consistent with the hierarchy identified in NZCPS Policy 13.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

The character and amenity values of (non-urban parts of) rural and coastal areas can be maintained and enhanced through:

- Identifying:
 - specific locations suitable for development or growth
 - landscape values which should be recognised and protected
- Identifying and protecting:
 - Stands of trees including indigenous vegetation
 - Individual or specimen trees
 - Significant natural areas
- Establishment of coastal management areas;
- Identifying key ecological enhancement opportunities and promoting these through non-regulatory and regulatory responses;
- Identification of areas of landscape sensitive to modification
 - high development potential
 - moderate development potential
 - limited development potential
 - no development potential
- Requiring the use of comprehensive planning approaches when significant new development is proposed;
- Developing landscape design guidelines for subdivision related to reconfiguration of lots, protection or enhancement of natural features and ecosystems, and rural activities in landscape units that are sensitive to change;
- Unitary Plan zoning techniques that use management areas, zones, and policy areas or overlays to guide change in rural areas so that change occurs in those parts of the landscape most able to accommodate it and in a manner that supports landscape values.

Significant Issue 5: Reverse sensitivity

A viable and diverse rural economy can make a significant contribution to the regional economic and community wellbeing. The introduction of more opportunities for rural lifestyle living and the quality of life expectations of these new residents will inevitably lead to increased conflict with other land uses. Conflicts can also arise between farming activities and other different productive activities. If these conflicts are not managed, the viability and diversity of the rural economy will be unnecessarily reduced.

Explanation:

The District Plan needs to address the matter of reverse sensitivity, while providing for some recognition of the needs of residents. The plan needs to recognise and protect existing rural activities and their typical characteristics to ensure reverse sensitivity issues are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Examples of situations that can give rise to reverse sensitivity problems include:

- Odour associated with normal farming activities, such as from dairy sheds, silage pits, onions drying, and intensive farming operations;
- The use of chemical sprays, spraydrift;
- Normal rural noise: dogs, cows, hens, farm machinery, bird scaring devices, hay making and other farming related activities;
- Dust, noise and traffic from mineral extraction activities;

which have an impact on those who live in rural areas for the perceived “peace and quiet”.

Adverse effects can also include incompatibility between different productive activities, such as:

- Agricultural sprays affecting greenhouse or organic farming operations;
- Odour causing a nuisance to neighbours;
- Sprays and fertilisers affecting stock and people.

Primary production should be able to be carried out in the rural zone without constraints being imposed on it by other, more sensitive activities. Because primary production activities generate effects which may affect the wellbeing of those living nearby, the interface between the two needs to be carefully managed. The potential for normal primary production activities to be constrained can increase when the number of people not involved in primary production also increases.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

The unitary plan is an appropriate mechanism containing regulations including land use rules and zoning:

1. To manage the adverse effects of rural uses, and safeguard their ability to continue operating satisfactorily, including:
 - Farming;
 - Forestry;
 - Horticulture;
 - Other primary production uses;
2. To protect existing land uses and resources that cannot realistically be located elsewhere or in urban areas, including:
 - Quarries, aggregate sources;
 - Aerodromes, airports;
 - Rural industries;
 - Large non-rural industries in rural areas (for example, the Glenbrook mill).

Significant Issue 6: Diversification of land uses

Rural areas are attractive to a wide range of non-rural uses, and if Council does not intervene to limit their spread in rural areas, productive rural potential will be lost and amenity values will be degraded. At the same time, access to rural areas is an integral part of the lifestyle of Aucklanders.

Explanation:

A wide range of activities unrelated to primary production occur in rural areas.

The unitary plan needs to provide flexibility for a broad range of land uses and opportunities in order to allow rural areas and settlements to be productive in different and innovative ways. In addition, opportunities for urban dwellers to gain access to rural resources needs to be provided for in a way that doesn't undermine rural values or rural productivity.

However, this must be balanced against the need to maintain the productive potential of rural land, to maintain rural landscapes, natural character values, open space, and indigenous biodiversity.

Therefore, it is appropriate to provide in rural areas for a range of activities that:

- “fit” comfortably within their particular local rural context,
- complement rural production activities, and
- promote land and water management objectives

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

Visitor accommodation:

Limit the location and scale to:

- Homestay, in houses anywhere in the rural area (including in settlements);
- Other than homestay, principally to locations within settlements that have infrastructure that can support them;
- Destinations outside settlements where it can be demonstrated that there will be significant environmental benefits;

Rural-related activities:

Limit the location and scale to locations where:

- Infrastructure is able adequately to support it, and
- It will not detract from rural amenity or landscape values;

Non-rural activities:

Limit the location and scale areas to locations where:

- Infrastructure is able adequately to support them;
- They will support growth management objectives;
- They will not detract from rural amenity or landscape values, and
- Significant environmental benefits will accrue from granting rather than refusing consent.

Significant Issue 7: Protection of heritage values including biodiversity and the protection and enhancement of natural features.

Heritage is an important aspect of community wellbeing. Important aspects of our heritage can be lost as land uses change and development occurs. The community places a value on retaining its heritage, and looks to Council to instigate some form of regulatory protection of those aspects of heritage it values.

Explanation:

Preservation of rural and coastal heritage involves protecting:

- Buildings, sites, and areas of historic heritage value;
- Places of significance to Tangata Whenua:
 - Sites of significance;
 - Land settlement land/Treaty of Waitangi claim land;
 - Archaeological remains;
- Biodiversity, landscapes, significant trees, natural features and sites of geological significance;
- Other places that the community values.

This is discussed in another issue paper.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

1. Include provisions that provide regulatory protection to heritage buildings, sites, significant natural areas, trees, and archaeological remains that are shown in a heritage register;
2. Require resource consent for activities that have the potential to undermine the strategies for any of these;
3. Allow demolition, felling, removal, or other modification of an item on the heritage register only in circumstances where:
 - It is absolutely unavoidable; and
 - Significant environmental benefits will accrue from granting rather than refusing consent;
4. Invest directly or use incentives, where these will contribute effectively to the protection of identified heritage values.

Significant Issue 8: Recreational use of rural and coastal areas

Land for recreational purposes is an important community asset. There are opportunities from time to time for Council to acquire suitable land for public for recreational purposes. In some parts of the rural and coastal areas of Auckland, there are deficiencies in the amount and type of public open space for recreation.

Some recreational uses are best located in rural areas. The unitary plan should provide for them to ensure they are established in appropriate locations, and their adverse effects are adequately managed.

Explanation:

People in Auckland value the amenity and recreational values offered by recreational destinations including:

- Recreational destinations such as regional parks, conservation estates, private forest park locations, islands;
- Tourist and visitor recreational facilities in rural areas;

- Coastlines and coastal holiday settlements.

However, with these can come:

- Heavy use of inadequate roading, services, and other infrastructure;
- Adverse effects from recreational vehicles;
- Provision of facilities and services that are more urban than rural, and which can lead to pressure for further development.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

- Designate sites that should be acquired for reserves;
- Provide incentives for land to be set aside as reserve or equivalent public access;
- Provide (through zoning or by resource consent) for recreational activities that require a rural location or that are associated with the rural resource, with appropriate management of their adverse effects;
- Require public access to and along the coast to be provided in appropriate locations.

Significant Issue 9: Economic sustainability of rural and coastal areas

Unless the natural resources found in rural areas are sustainably managed, the economic sustainability of rural areas cannot be assured.

Explanation:

The land, soil and water resources of the District are finite resources upon which much of the economic wellbeing of the people of the region relies. The versatility and availability of these resources is fundamental to the prosperity of Auckland rural areas.

The management of these resources must therefore be focussed on ensuring that they remain in a suitable state and form for present and future generations. This can be achieved by ensuring that the effects of activities do not:

- Adversely affect the life supporting capacity of natural and physical resources, or
- Result in the versatility and availability of these resources being lost or compromised.

Activities that can adversely affect the District's rural resources can be grouped as follows:

- Those that are not reliant on rural resources for their location, and
- Those that rely directly on particular rural resources, but have a significant potential to damage those resources, and therefore may not be sustainable in terms of their cumulative effects on land, soil and water resources.

Non-rural uses located appropriately in rural areas can make a significant contribution to the rural economy, however, provided their adverse effects can be avoided remedied or mitigated through conditions of resource consent or operating standards. Where they cannot, they should not be located in rural areas.

For example, ad-hoc residential development (in the form of countryside living) with a high level of fragmentation can prevent or severely limit activities that rely on the natural resources from continuing or establishing.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

1. Ensure the plan requires that activities that do not rely directly on particular rural resources, such as countryside living, are not provided for in rural areas unless:

- Significant environmental benefits will accrue from granting rather than refusing consent, and
 - The versatility and availability of land, soil and water resources will not be lost or compromised.
2. Provide for activities that contribute to the economic sustainability of rural Auckland, by ensuring that resource consents are required only where necessary to evaluate the effects of the activities on the versatility and availability of the natural resources found in rural areas.
 3. Acquire land for esplanade reserves when land subdivision occurs.

See also:

Significant Issue 2: Sustainability of natural resources

Significant Issue 4: Managing residential growth

Significant Issue 5: Reverse sensitivity

Significant Issue 6: Diversification of land uses

Significant Issue 10: Regionally significant infrastructure

Some regionally significant infrastructure needs to be located in rural areas. The unitary plan needs to make appropriate provision for it to ensure urban, rural, and coastal areas within and outside Auckland will be adequately serviced.

The coastal environment is a focus for significant infrastructure, some of which has a functional need to locate in the coastal marine area. There is a national policy directive to provide for the operation of existing infrastructure and the development of new infrastructure. This infrastructure can have a significant influence on future urban growth and change the natural values and coastal character of the coastal environment.

Explanation:

Motorways such as State highway 1, the national electricity transmission grid, and the main gas transmission pipeline are examples of regionally and nationally important infrastructure that are located in rural areas. The unitary plan needs to make appropriate provision for them. Regionally significant infrastructure includes:

- Transport infrastructure:
 - Roads
 - Rail
 - Airports, aerodromes and their flight paths
- Urban support infrastructure:
 - Power transmission lines, switching stations
 - Gas pipelines
 - Water supply dams, pipelines
 - Wastewater treatment and disposal
 - Refuse collection and disposal
- Rural support infrastructure:
 - Halls and community centres
 - Villages, rural settlements, and retail services within them
 - Refuse collection and disposal facilities

Infrastructure of regional significance located in the coastal environment includes:

- The ports of Auckland and Onehunga.
- Auckland International Airport.
- Devonport Naval Base.
- The state highway network – SH1, 16 and 20.
- Mangere and North Shore Wastewater treatment facilities and their associated pipe network.
- The urban stormwater network which discharges into the coastal marine area.
- Otahuhu Power Station.
- Wiri Oil Terminal.
- Commuter and cargo ferry terminals, including those in the central Waitemata Harbour and at Waiheke and Great Barrier Islands.
- Power and telephone cables to the Hauraki Gulf Islands.
- International offshore cables.
- Electricity transmission lines, particularly those forming part of the national grid.
- The network of recreational boat ramps and boat launching facilities.

The 2010 NZCPS gives greater prominence to providing for infrastructure in the coastal environment, and in particular new technologies associated with renewable electricity generation. Much of the regionally and nationally significant infrastructure is well established and provided for in district and regional plans or through resource consents.

There is a need for the Unitary Plan to recognise the range of infrastructure in the region and to provide a strategic policy framework for dealing with infrastructure proposals, as well as through detailed plan controls. The Infrastructure work stream is reviewing the type and level of control on infrastructure.

Three infrastructure issues of particular relevance to the coastal environment are:

1. Making provision for new infrastructure particularly for renewable electricity generation and supply. This includes new wind turbines on land and possibly in the coastal marine area, as well as new technologies associated with the use of wave, tide and current generation. To date the only approval has been given to Crest Energy Ltd to establish a multi-turbine tidal energy farm in the Kaipara Harbour outside the Auckland region. Provision needs to consider both land based facilities as well as infrastructure in the coastal marine area itself.

Existing policy statement and plan approaches are to leave specific site selection to industry and to provide criteria for assessing infrastructure proposals. This avoids the Auckland Council having to identify suitable sites for infrastructure, where it is not privy to the necessary technical or commercial knowledge. The existing plan approaches also focus on identifying areas where infrastructure may not be acceptable for environment, social or cultural reasons. Results from the future marine spatial planning exercise are likely to assist with additional information to inform this approach.

Comment [D5]: Right on!

2. The NZCPS has a number of directive policies that require the Unitary Plan to deal with both the protection of natural values and the provision of use and development, particularly regionally and nationally significant infrastructure. In the case of the coastal environment the conflict arises where infrastructure wants to locate in

outstanding natural landscapes or areas of high natural character or areas of high recreation use. To date plans have mostly dealt with these matters by individual policies and left the trade-off to be made at the individual resource consent basis or through decisions of the Environment Court.

Further consideration should be given to whether the Unitary Plan should provide regional policy guidance on how balances are to be achieved (or trade-offs made) in dealing with competing uses in the coastal environment. It is anticipated that the Hauraki Gulf marine spatial planning project will identify the values of specific areas of the CMA which will assist in managing competing uses.

3. There is a need to explicitly distinguish between the maintenance, repair and upgrading of existing infrastructure and the development of new infrastructure. Having a clear distinction will enable more targeted policies and rules and avoid minor maintenance work being caught by provisions aimed at the development of new infrastructure.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

Another issue paper discusses infrastructure issues and how the unitary plan should address them.

Significant Issue 11: Managing the coastal marine area

The management framework for the Coastal Marine Area is different from that for land. This requires certain approaches be adopted in the regional coastal plan component of the Unitary Plan.

More targeted management of coastal water quality and marine ecosystem values is required to retain existing high values and to halt further degradation of water quality and marine flora and fauna. Trend information is available on coastal water quality from the regional coastal water quality monitoring network. However information on marine ecosystem values is more scattered and uneven. As well as expanding the information on marine ecosystem values, an assessment of ecosystem vulnerability and risk is necessary to provide an evidence base for future policy work.

Explanation:

The coastal marine area is the largest area of “public open space” in the Auckland region. The foreshore and seabed which was previously owned by the Crown is now common marine coastal area under the Marine and Coastal Areas Act 2011. However the Minister of Conservation continues to represent the Crown’s interest in the coastal marine area under the RMA. Those parts of the Unitary Plan having coastal plan functions must be prepared “in conjunction” with the Minister of Conservation and final approval of this plan is the responsibility of the Minister of Conservation, rather than the Auckland Council. The development of a collaborative process with the Department of Conservation is therefore an important component of developing a successful RCP-unitary plan.

Control of activities in the coastal marine area is exercised through sections 12, 14 and 15 of the RMA. All the sections have the presumption of no use unless permitted by a rule in a coastal plan or a resource consent. They are also characterised by their specific detail in terms of the type and location of the activity. For example section 12 (1) (b) states – “no person may in the coastal marine area – erect, reconstruct, place, alter, extend, remove or demolish any structure or any part of a structure that is fixed in, on, under or over any foreshore or seabed – unless expressly allowed by a rule in a regional coastal plan or a resource consent.” In comparison section 9(3) simply states in relation to restrictions on use of land– “no person may use land in a manner that contravenes a district rule”. This will affect the level of detail to be included in any Unitary Plan rule.

A coastal permit (section 12) has three components – approval to undertake the work (eg a focus on the physical effects of the proposal); approval to occupy the foreshore and seabed and approval for the activity (i.e. use of a structure for a jetty and use of any buildings on the jetty). The RMA enables the Council to apply a coastal occupation charge to activities that occupy land in the coastal marine area. Although the former Auckland Regional Council investigated options for a coastal occupation charging regime, it did not proceed due to the legal and policy uncertainties related to the RMA requirements.

Comment [D6]: See s.32 report for PC-2 to the ARPC

The timing of this work is dependent on the decisions made by the Political Working Group in relation to the exclusion of the Regional Coastal Plan from the initial notification of the Unitary Plan.

Aquaculture is a priority issue for the management of the Coastal Marine Area

It is anticipated that there will be increased interest in expanding the aquaculture industry in the Auckland region. Hence this is identified as a priority issue for the coastal marine area. A separate project is underway to look at options for implementing a new management regime for aquaculture. This report is being prepared by the Coastal section of the Environmental Strategy and Policy department and will be reported to the Environment and Sustainability Forum and Regional Development and Operations Committee later this year. Its recommendations will inform the Unitary Plan.

Comment [D7]: ES Forum and RDO Committee

Although there have been positive improvements in coastal water quality, monitoring indicates a decline in water quality at some of the best sampling sites. This decline highlights the need to focus on land management practices and discharges from land. Although there were declines in the level of suspended sediment across the region, elevated levels of sediment presence well above pre-human conditions remains a major concern. High sediment levels increase turbidity and smother organisms living on the sea bed.

Regional monitoring and investigation has focussed on changes over time in the number and types of organisms that live in soft sediments and on intertidal and subtidal reefs. It shows that the most degraded sites are found in sheltered coastal areas closest to the oldest urban areas and the healthiest sites were found at the greatest distance from the Auckland city centre.

Comment [D8]: This conclusion is a result of a combination of water quality monitoring (direct physico-chemical and using shellfish as WQ integrators), sediment quality monitoring, benthic sampling and application of the harbour health model, plus a heap of modelling and investigations, in addition to the state of the environment monitoring I think the first sentence is referring to. Why not just keep it simple and say that monitoring and investigation has shown that the most degraded.....??

Knowledge of the type, diversity and spatial distribution of marine ecosystems is less than our knowledge of terrestrial ecosystems. Work is underway to bring existing information sources together to enable a more comprehensive identification of areas of significant marine habitat value. The proposed marine spatial planning exercise for the Hauraki Gulf intends to provide more detailed spatial mapping of the marine ecological values. This will inform decisions to be made in the Regional Coastal Plan review regarding the updating of identified coastal protection areas, and siting of activities such as boat moorings and aquaculture activities. It will also complement data on existing terrestrial and coastal edge natural areas.

The NZCPS has three policies relating to indigenous biodiversity, coastal water quality, sedimentation and discharges of contaminants. These require:

1. The protection of specific ecosystems and species on both the land and in the water. These include habitats of indigenous species that are important for recreational, commercial, traditional or cultural purposes. E.g. key fish nursery habitats such as eelgrass beds.
2. Improving water quality in areas it has deteriorated so that it is having a significant adverse effect on ecosystems, water based recreation, aquaculture, shellfish gathering and cultural activities.

3. Excluding stock from the coastal marine area, intertidal areas and other water bodies and riparian margins within a prescribed timeframe –this is discussed more in the Natural Environment issues paper.
4. Controls on land use activities to reduce sediment loadings in runoff and stormwater systems.
5. That subdivision, use and development not result in significant increases in sedimentation in the CMA.
6. The implementation of marine receiving environment water quality standards.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

Another paper discusses whether the coastal marine area should be included in the unitary plan.

Significant Issue 12: Treaty of Waitangi

Decisions from Treaty of Waitangi claims will affect the coastal environment and the implications of the Marine and Coastal Area Act 2011 may change management regimes for some parts of the coastal environment.

Explanation:

Maori have a long and close association with the coastal environment and the coastal marine area. It has been a focus for settlement, transport and food gathering since Maori first arrived in Auckland and is an area of deep historical, cultural and spiritual importance for iwi. The Maori issues paper provides a more extensive review of these matters, including how best to recognise and protect sites and areas of significance to tangata whenua in the coastal environment.

Recent legislation such as the Marine and Coastal Area Act has focussed on customary rights, ownership and access matters, rather than the management of the natural and physical resources of the coastal environment. The RMA also addresses the issue of customary activities. It enables a recognised customary activity to be carried out despite rules in the Unitary Plan, although this ability is constrained by the need for certain pre-authorisations. Equally a plan must not make an activity a permitted activity if it will or is likely to have a significant adverse effect on recognised customary activities.

Further work is required to clarify the implications of the new legislation on the Council's RMA responsibilities in the coastal environment, and more particularly in the coastal marine area.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

Another issue paper discusses Treaty of Waitangi claims, consultation with iwi, and incorporation of the principles of the Treaty should be included in the unitary plan.

Significant Issue 13: Inter-regional integrated management

Better integrated management is required between land and water within the region and between the Auckland, Northland and Waikato regions. The need for this is highlighted in initiatives for the Kaipara Harbour and the Hauraki Gulf.

Explanation:

Three levels of integration have been identified:

1. Improved strategic integration between future urban growth directions, the management of existing urban and rural land uses and the discharge of contaminants into the coastal marine area. This relationship is discussed in Issue 5.3.

2. Integration of policy approaches and controls on specific activities that cross mean high water spring boundaries. The Unitary Plan provides the opportunity to improve the level of integration between the management of the land and the management of the coastal marine area, as responsibility for both areas now rests with the one council. Activities that require a more integrated approach are:
- Future coastal subdivision and potential demands for jetties and other similar facilities for greater public and private access to the CMA;
 - Marina development;
 - Commercial and recreation facilities such as water based transport, boat launching facilities and the provision of car and trailer parking and other services;
 - Provision of future boat mooring areas;
 - Tourist ventures involving land and sea components;
 - Land based transport and processing facilities for aquaculture and for managing activities such as mangrove removal and disposal;
 - Coastal margin planning for the provision of public access, coastal walkways and reserves;
 - Management of coastal hazards and implementation of coastal protection measures;
 - Land based disposal of dredged seabed.
3. Improved co-ordination between the Auckland Council and adjacent regional councils –Northland Regional Council and Environment Waikato.

The Hauraki Gulf Forum and the Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group have been formed to identify significant management issues for these areas. The Auckland Council is involved in both groups. Issues identified by the Forum and the Kaipara Management Group cover matters that need to be addressed by actions taken under a range of legislation and not just the RMA. However the Unitary Plan has an important role in ensuring that its provisions are as consistent as possible with those district and regional plans of the adjacent regions. Having a co-ordinated approach to aquaculture management is one critical issue for both the Firth of Thames and the Kaipara Harbour. This will be particularly significant given the relaxed requirements and large new areas for fish farming being introduced by the Aquaculture Legislation Amendment Bill.

Comment [D9]: Challenging, particularly in the Gulf given the relaxed requirements and large new area for fish farming being introduced by the new Bill

The Council also needs to be aware that approaches taken by adjacent councils can impact on Auckland's coastal environment. For example, monitoring of coastal water quality in the Auckland region has identified a slight overall improvement. However significant discharges of contaminants from dairying occurring in the Waikato region continue to affect the Firth of Thames and potentially the wider Hauraki Gulf.

Recommended approach for the unitary plan:

Co -ordination between regions and inclusion in the unitary plan of provisions relating to the coastal environment and the coastal marine area will follow from initiatives independent of the statutory procedures of the RMA and unitary plan drafting.