

Additional information relating to section 1.0 Introduction

Relating to section 1.4
Statutory environment

Unitary Plan responses to New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

Policy	Unitary Plan response
Policy 1 – Extent and characteristics of the coastal environment	Unitary Plan maps, Part 2 section 2.7 Sustainably managing our coastal environment
Policy 2 – The Treaty of Waitangi, tangata whenua and Maori heritage	Part 2 section 2.5 Addressing issues of significance to Mana Whenua, Part 3 section 3.3.5 Mana Whenua overlay
Policy 3 – Precautionary approach	Part 4 section 4.3.6.1 strongest precautionary approach taken where values are highest.
Policy 4 – Integration	Unitary Plan maps, Part 3 section 3.2.5 Coastal zones – traverses MHWS line.
Policy 5 – Land or waters managed or held under other Acts	Part 2 section 2.7.3 Managing the Hauraki Gulf/Te Moana Nui O Toi/Tikapa Moana
Policy 6 – Activities in the coastal environment	Part 4 section 4.3.6 Coastal zones
Policy 7 – Strategic planning	Part 2 section 2.1.6 Issues of regional significance
Policy 8 – Aquaculture	Part 4 section 4.3.6.1.1.8
Policy 9 – Ports	Part 4 section 4.3.6.4 and 5, Part 4 section 4.5.4.5 Port precinct
Policy 10 – Reclamation and de-reclamation	Part 4 section 4.3.6 coastal zones
Policy 11 – Indigenous biological diversity	Part 4 section 4.4.8.2 Significant Ecological Areas Marine
Policy 12 – Harmful aquatic organisms	Part 4 section 4.3.6.1 activity table
Policy 13 – Preservation of natural character	Unitary Plan maps, Part 2 section 2.4.3.1 Natural Character of the coastal environment, Part 4 section 4.4.6.2
Policy 14 – Restoration of natural character	As above
Policy 15 – Natural features and natural landscapes	As above
Policy 16 – Surf breaks of national significance	Part 6 appendix 6.3 Schedule of significant surf breaks, Part 4 section 4.3.6.1
Policy 17 – Historic heritage identification and protection	Unitary Plan maps, Part 6 appendix 9 Schedule of significant historic heritage places
Policy 18 – Public open space	Part 2 section 2.7.2 Use, occupation and development in the coastal marine area, Part 3 section 3.2.3 Public open space zones
Policy 19 – Walking access	As above
Policy 20 – Vehicle access	Part 4 section 4.3.6.1.2.17
Policy 21 – Enhancement of water quality	Part 4 section 4.3.6.1 Land and Water use controls

Unitary Plan Draft Section 32 report
Appendix 3.0.23 – Additional information relating to section 1.0 Introduction

Policy 22 – Sedimentation	As above
Policy 23 – Discharge of contaminants	As above
Policy 24 – Identification of coastal hazards	Part 4 section 4.2.3 natural hazards
Policy 25 – Subdivision, use and development in areas of coastal hazard risk	Part 4 section 4.2.4 subdivision
Policy 26 – Natural defences against coastal hazards	Part 4 section 4.2.3 natural hazards, Part 3 section 3.1.3.15 vegetation management
Policy 27 – Strategies for protecting significant existing development from coastal hazard risk	Part 4 section 4.2.3 natural hazards
Policy 28 – Monitoring and review the effectiveness of the NZCPS	N/A
Policy 29 – Restricted Coastal Activities	Not within Unitary Plan

Unitary Plan response to National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission

Policy	Unitary Plan response
Recognition of the national benefits of transmission	Part 2 section 2.1.2 Enabling economic wellbeing
Managing the environmental effects of transmission	Part 2 section 2.3.2 infrastructure and energy, Part 4 section 4.2.1 infrastructure
Managing the adverse effects of third parties on the transmission network	Part 4 section 4.4.1.4 electricity transmission corridor
Maps	Unitary Plan maps - infrastructure
Long term strategic planning for transmission assets	Part 2 section 2.1.2 enabling economic wellbeing

Unitary Plan response to National Policy Statement on Renewable Energy Generation

Policy	Unitary Plan response
Recognising the benefits of renewable electricity generation activities	Part 2 section 2.3 enabling economic wellbeing
Acknowledging the practical implications of achieving New Zealand's target for electricity generation from renewable resources	As above
Acknowledging the practical constraints associated with the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing renewable electricity generation activities	Part 4 section 4.2.1.1 activity table
Managing reverse sensitivity effects on renewable electricity generation activities	As above
Incorporating provisions for renewable electricity generation activities into regional policy statements and regional and district plans	As above
Incorporating provisions for small and	As above

community-scale renewable electricity generation activities into regional policy statements and regional and district plans	
Enabling identification of renewable electricity generation possibilities	As above

Unitary Plan response to National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011

Policy	Unitary Plan response
Water quality	Part 2 section 2.6.3 Freshwater, Part 4 section 4.2.3.8 Lakes, rivers and wetland management
Water quantity	Part 4 section 4.2.3.15 Taking, using, damming and diversion or water
Integrated management	Part 2 section 2.6.3 Freshwater
Tangata whenua roles and interests	As above, Part 2 section 2.5 addressing issues of significance to Mana Whenua
Progressive implementation programme	Part 2 section 2.6.3 Freshwater

Relating to section 1.6.8

The ePlan and planning enquiry

The on-line version of the Unitary Plan offers users the opportunity to access the document via a number of avenues. Firstly, users can view the online document – the ePlan, in a traditional way from page 1 to page x, navigating via the table of contents set out as a tree structure on one side of the screen. User can also search for keywords and print out selected sections using the ePlan system. Secondly users can type in an address or click on a point in the GIS system to be provided material that shows the relevant zoning, overlays and other special characteristics that apply to the selected site. Thirdly, users can determine the relevant planning provisions for selected activities through completing the planning enquiry process.

The planning enquiry can be based on a proposed activity that the user may wish to undertake on a selected site. Many enquiries will likely be a combination of the second and third forms of enquiry system. This system has been specifically chosen to simplify the process of determining whether a particular development proposal needs a resource consent, and has been based on the most popular forms of enquiry that planning officers receive over the front counter and phones.

The on-line enquiry system is one of the key innovations associated with the Auckland Unitary Plan and has the potential to greatly enhance the public's understanding and use of Auckland's planning system and considerably reduce regulatory costs. It is anticipated that the ePlan will be the predominant platform for access to the Unitary Plan. It also has the ability to greatly enhance the feedback / submission process by enabling on-line submissions in addition to hard copy.

Relating to section 1.7.1

The role of resource consents

The various roles and functions within the Resource Consents department that assist in implementing the outcomes of the Unitary Plan are:

- Lodgement, processing and making a decision on various resource consent applications. Given that Auckland Council is now a unitary authority this involves the processing of land use and subdivision consents as well as coastal, discharge and water permits, which were previously processed separately by the district councils and the regional council respectively. Consents which are granted may be granted subject to conditions which are in accordance with the relevant objectives, policies and assessment criteria. In 2012 the department processed a total of 9636 resource consents (refer to table 1)
- Undertaking compliance monitoring for granted consents to ensure that the outcomes anticipated by the granted consents are met
- Providing feedback in a pre-application meeting where applicants can discuss the merits of a proposal/concept with the relevant council officers prior to the development of a consent application
- Providing information and guidance on face-to-face front counter and over-the-phone enquiries
- Developing and implementing best practice guidelines for the assessment of resource consent applications. This guidance is developed and implemented by the Practice and Training team to the wider team This ensures that the assessment and processing of resource consent applications is done in a manner which are in keeping with current best practice methods as well as achieving the outcomes of the Unitary Plan as set out in the objectives and policies.
- Undertaking enforcement action on breaches of rules within the district and regional plans. A summary of the types of enforcement action undertaken by Council in 2012 can be found in Table 2
- Provide feedback to the relevant policy development team to further improve provisions.

While the resource consents department does not have input/formal process into effecting change in other departments' processes, the consents team works closely with specialist teams within Council who provide input into the processing and assessment of resource consents (i.e. drainage engineers, heritage teams etc.) as well as Watercare and Auckland Transport.

Learnings from the consenting process are currently being investigated to improve the ongoing quality of consenting and also to deliver more accurate monitoring information and therefore assist ongoing policy development. The 'Compliance Realignment project' and 'Monitoring and Compliance Current State Analysis' seek to harmonise the varied data capture methodologies being used by the area based compliance and monitoring teams within the Resource Consents dept. This will seek to standardise the data that is being collected on the ground through planning complaints and the monitoring for compliance with consent conditions. This project is an ongoing internal improvement project and is expected to be implemented during the 2013-14 financial year.

The resource consents department, in its regulatory and administrative role enables the outcomes anticipated by the unitary plan to be achieved through the following:

- Ensuring a correct and consistent application of the unitary plan provisions in their interpretation of the rules as well as the processing of applications
- Undertaking compliance and monitoring to ensure that the rules and conditions of consent are complied with as well as taking enforcement action where necessary

- Ensuring that other departments in Council undertake their decision-making within the context of the unitary plan provisions
- Educating the general public about the requirements of the unitary plan in their customer-facing role

Table 1 – showing the breakdown of the different types of consents processed in 2012:

Consent application type	Total
Coastal	77
Discharge to air	52
Earthworks & contaminated land	216
Joint land use & subdivision	446
Land Use	4,737
Rural & wastewater	74
Storm water & ITP	108
Subdivision	1,080
Trees	1,793
Vary or cancel a condition under s127	748
Water allocation	305
Total	9,636

Table 2 – showing the breakdown of the enforcement action undertaken in 2012:

Enforcement action	Total
Complaints received about RMA matters	7,183
Abatement Notices issued	75
Infringement Notices served	426
Court actions	17

Relating to section 1.8

Explanation of Peer Review Process

Legal review

Both the August 2012 and December 2012 drafts were reviewed by a Legal Advisory Group set up by the Council's Legal Services team and comprising senior lawyers from the law firms on the Council's panel. The review focused at a high level on compliance with requirements of the RMA, consistency with recent Environment Court case law relating to plan provisions, and the degree to which objectives were supported by policies, rules and methods. Legal review findings were used to refine preparation of the notified version of the Unitary Plan.

Senior planning review

All draft versions of the Unitary Plan were reviewed section by section by senior managers who are in turn highly experienced planners. The review process considered principles such as being outcomes focused and ensuring that planning burden is relative to planning gain. It also identified improvements needed to

improve horizontal and vertical alignment of language, outcomes and degrees of intervention to tie together the Unitary Plan in a cohesive manner.

External Advisory Panel

To assist officers in testing ideas, policy approaches and later draft provisions an external advisory panel of independent professionals was formed in early 2011 and met on a six weekly basis. The role of the panel has been to operate in an objective way recognising their skill-sets and high degree of understanding of the development, the planning process and legislation. As a sounding board, the panel considered and commented on most papers presented to PWP through until late 2012. With membership made up of planners, architects, developers, environmentalists and landscape architects, perspectives were also offered on the practicality of plan provisions. The outcome of this panel was that presentations were more informed, robust and insightful in their options, considerations, evaluations and recommendations. From a process and governance perspective, the External Advisory Panel also assisted in enhancing the basis upon which PWP direction and committee decisions were made. See below for the Unitary Plan External Advisory Panel Terms of Reference.

External Advisory Panel Terms of Reference May 2011

Background

The formation of the Auckland Council on 1 November 2011 has created an incredible opportunity to simplify Auckland's statutory planning system under the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act). Resource management planning in Auckland is currently governed by the following key plans:

- Auckland Regional Policy Statement
- Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal
- Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water
- Auckland Regional Plan: Farm Dairy Discharges
- Auckland Regional Plan: Sediment Control
- Auckland City District Plan (Isthmus, Central Area and Hauraki Gulf Islands)
- Franklin District Plan
- Manukau City District Plan
- North Shore City District Plan
- Papakura District Plan
- Rodney District Plan
- Waitakere City District Plan

Each of these plans runs to between two and four volumes of text and maps, and collectively they form a document almost three metres in length. It is widely acknowledged by those involved in the planning process that there is a great deal of repetition between the plans and a major opportunity to rationalise the issues, objectives, policies and methods contained within them.

In recognising the need to prepare a new plan or plans for Auckland under the Resource Management Act, the Auckland Transition Agency created a department of two teams, each comprising 10 staff, dedicated to preparing Auckland's 'unitary plan'. Given the sheer scale and complexity of the task, this team will be augmented by staff from many other parts of the new organisation.

The term 'unitary plan' is not defined in the Act, however the council has confirmed for itself that the 'unitary plan' is essentially a combination of the required policy statement and plans under the Act (i.e. regional policy statement, regional plan (coastal) and district plan). It may also include plans such as the three additional plans prepared by the former Auckland Regional Council. This having been said, some plans (e.g. the Hauraki Gulf Islands District Plan) or parts of plans (e.g. Wynyard Quarter and Long Bay) may be incorporated through a plan change after the initial public notification of the plan. Generally speaking, the existing plans listed above will continue to apply until they are replaced by an operative 'unitary plan' (i.e. one that has progressed through the full plan development process under the Act). The council aims to have a complete draft of the 'unitary plan' by the end of 2012.

The need for an External Advisory Panel

While the council is well-resourced in terms of experienced planning and specialist staff, and has the ability to contract in additional expertise if necessary, past experience has shown that an independent panel of experts can add a great deal to the quality of the discussion and the development of content. Panels such as the Unitary Plan External Advisory Panel act as a sounding board for council staff as they develop and refine proposals for inclusion in the final version of the plan. In addition, they give a practitioners perspective on the practicality of plan provisions, and can provide an further degree of confidence to decision-makers that proposals are robust, well-reasoned and workable.

Membership of the Unitary Plan External Advisory Panel

Members of the panel represent a range of professions that have regular contact with plans prepared under the Resource Management Act. There are other professions (e.g. the legal and engineering professions) that will also have a great deal of contact with the 'unitary plan', however the council wishes to keep the panel as nimble and focussed as possible, and will seek the views of other professions through alternative means.

The role of the Unitary Plan External Advisory Panel

The role of the panel is essentially to act as an independent professional sounding board for council planning staff to present issues, options and planning provisions (including maps) between the first panel meeting and public notification of the 'unitary plan'. As previously noted, it is also possible that decision-makers (e.g. the Mayor and councillors) will also wish to know the panel's opinion in relation to specific topics. Importantly, the council does not see the panel as an advocacy group, and requests that panel members act in an objective manner rather than seeking to advance their own interests or those of their clients.

Conflict of interest

Members are expected to immediately declare any conflict of interest that arises as a result of topics scheduled for discussion, or material presented to the panel. Any conflicts of interest should be made known to the council's Unitary Plan Manager or Plan Development Manager as soon as they arise.

Confidentiality

Members are required to hold all material presented to them or discussed at panel meetings in confidence. Members will also be required to sign a confidentiality agreement at the first panel meeting.

Meetings and administration

Meetings will be held on a monthly basis, with times scheduled to accommodate as far as possible the availability of members. Discussion papers will generally be circulated at least three working days prior to the meeting. Key discussion points will be recorded at the meeting for agreement by members. Members may, from time to time, be requested to provide additional comments or feedback after the close of the meeting and before the next meeting.

A fee of \$150 per hour will be paid for attendance at meetings and the reading of any papers circulated in advance.

Policy Advisory Group (previously called Strategic Management Group)

Following the External Advisory Panel papers destined for PWP were reviewed by the Policy Advisory Group. The Policy Advisory Group is an officers group from internal council departments, the IMSB (Independent Maori Statutory Board) and CCO's (Council Controlled Organisations) as well as representatives in an observer capacity from the Ministry for the Environment and the New Zealand Transport Authority. This group provided multi-disciplinary perspectives and an oversight of policy direction and content. Chairing meetings is council's Chief Planning Officer. Beyond its content review role, the group also considered programme matters including finances, risks and associated mitigation measures.

The Unitary Plan Oversight Group

Also considering content and programme matters the Unitary Plan Oversight Group meets on a more frequent weekly basis to provide strategic oversight and resolve problems related to the delivery of the programme. This group is the day to day project governance authority and also serves to brief mayoral and deputy mayoral support staff on programme and content developments.

Together the legal reviews, senior planner review, External Advisory Panel, Policy Advisory Group and Unitary Plan Oversight Group have strengthened the Unitary Plan's robustness, internal consistency, across council integration and alignment to the Auckland Plan.

Relating to section 1.9

Council's strategic units

Strategic council units such as the Spatial and Infrastructure Strategy unit and the Research Investigations and Monitoring unit are also instrumental to the success of the Unitary Plan by providing support to Council, CCOs and external stakeholders.

For example the Spatial and Infrastructure Strategy unit offers support to network utility providers to ensure their infrastructure planning is carried out in an integrated manner and aligns with Council's strategic direction. This will be crucial in ensuring Unitary Plan objectives and policies are met, such as infrastructure capacity enabling expected growth while managing adverse effects and protecting the quality of the natural environment.

The Research Investigations and Monitoring unit also actively contributes to the success of the Unitary Plan by undertaking ongoing research and monitoring of key issues such as the state of the environment and land supply and growth capacity e.g. Capacity for Growth Study 2012. This ongoing research and monitoring forms an important part of the feedback loop that will inform the ongoing review of the Unitary Plan through formal consultation, hearings and once it is operative.

Council strategies and implementation plans

Auckland Council has many strategic documents and each of these will affect the success of achieving the outcomes of the Unitary Plan to varying degrees.

- Economic Development Strategy: Sets a regional strategic direction that aims to create favourable conditions that enable business to grow. This in turn informs Local Board plans and agreements which are able to focus on local economic development. These will work in tandem with the Unitary Plan to achieve expected outcomes such as "...a hierarchy of centres and identified growth corridors that support the compact urban form."
- Housing Strategic Action Plan: Outcomes involving the supply, quality and choice of housing are a crucial part of the Unitary Plan. Along with any Central Government housing strategy, this action plan will play an important role in helping to achieve Unitary Plan outcomes.
- Asset management plans: A variety of asset management plans deal with public assets such as civic buildings, parks, libraries, community halls and stadium. The supply and quality of these assets will be directly relevant to achieving the social infrastructure, public open space and recreation facilities outcomes of the Unitary Plan.
- Historic Heritage Action Plan: Protecting Auckland's historic heritage is a significant outcome sought by the Unitary Plan. This action plan will support the implementation of these outcomes.
- Property Strategy 2012: Will enable Council to deliver a strategic and co-ordinated approach to property ownership, management, planning and development in Auckland.
- Indigenous Biodiversity Strategy: from this long term strategy, various implementation plans and projects will be developed
- Natural Hazard Risk Management Plan: to reduce the effects of natural hazards on people, property, infrastructure and the natural environment
- Marine Spatial Plans
- Waste Management and Minimisation Plan
- Sport and Recreation Strategic Action Plan
- Events Policy
- Arts and Culture Strategic Action Plan
- Environment Strategic Action Plan
- Open Space Strategic Action Plan
- Water Strategic Action Plan
- Māori Responsiveness Portfolio
- Catchment management plans

For a full list see the *Auckland Council Strategic Programme: 2012-2015*.

Stakeholder implementation plans

Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs) such as Auckland Transport (AT) and Watercare have a variety of strategies and implementation plans that will also play a

vital role in delivering the strategic direction in the Auckland Plan. These in turn will be integral to the success of achieving the Unitary Plan outcomes. They include legacy (still in effect), proposed and adopted documents.

Auckland Transport

Regional level

- Regional Land Transport Programme: sets out and prioritises transport projects and services that facilitate people accessing jobs, recreation and education, and for good to reach their markets. Will also provide basis for requests for government funding.
- Integrated Transport Programme 2012-2041: this will set the 30 year investment programme to meet the Auckland Plan transport objectives across all transport modes covering the responsibilities of all transport agencies. It will coordinate the investment and other interventions of network providers.
- Ten year network plans: these establish the high level priority for transport users for all transport modes. Levels of service define the desired performance of the network for users of the system and the locations served by the network e.g. Regional Arterial Road Plan, Regional Public Transport Plan and Regional Road Safety Plan.

Local area and operational level

- Corridor Management Plans (CMPs): these are a multi-disciplinary approach to network and street design that seeks to balance the movement and place function of roads. CMPs are used to support Council led planning initiatives such as master, precinct and area plans.
- Comprehensive Parking Management and Town Centre Transport Plans: these are a transport response to growth in centres
- Network Operating Plans: these are a new planning tool that links strategic transport objectives with operational interventions.
- Asset and Network Management Plans
- Major integrated, multi-modal infrastructure projects e.g. City Rail Link

Watercare

- Asset Management Plan 2012-2022
- Auckland Regional Water Demand Management Plan 2011
- Statement of Intent 2012-2015

Similarly, asset management plans for other infrastructure and network utility providers (e.g. telecommunications) will also impact on the success of the UP especially if they do not align with the Unitary Plan objectives and policies related to growth.

Iwi planning documents

The RMA (section 35A) requires Auckland Council to keep and maintain, for each iwi and hapu within its region, a record of the planning documents that are recognised by each iwi authority and lodged with the local authority. The Act (Section 61, 66 and 74) also requires Auckland Council to take into account any relevant planning document recognised by an iwi authority, and lodged with the Council to the extent that it has a bearing on the resource management issues of the region when preparing or changing a regional policy statement, regional plan and district plan.

Iwi planning documents articulate Maori values and provide the perspectives of the relevant Mana Whenua group on resource management issues. The iwi planning

documents provide practical guidance to address resource management issues in a manner that is consistent with the values of the iwi or hapu.

The methods contained within the iwi planning documents that have been lodged with Auckland Council or with legacy councils, have guided the preparation of the objectives, policies and rules within the Treaty of Waitangi provisions of the Draft Unitary Plan. Therefore, the relationship between the Unitary Plan and iwi planning documents is reciprocal – the iwi planning documents guide the outcomes that are sought in the Unitary Plan and the Unitary Plan helps achieve the outcomes sought within the iwi planning documents. See Attachment x for a full list of current iwi planning documents.

Placed based and project based plans

There are many place based or project based plans that are linked to the desired outcomes of the Unitary Plan. These provide support in delivering both Auckland Plan and Unitary Plan outcomes at a localised level. These include:

- City Centre Master Plan: a local strategy alongside Auckland Plan
- City Centre Retail Action Plan: outlines capital works projects that will ensure the city centre is the key retail destination
- Waterfront Plan - local strategy alongside Auckland Plan
- New Lynn Transformation Plan: a capital works and planning project. This and other similar projects will be important in helping to realise outcomes involving a compact city model and growth around centres.
- Tamaki Transformation project: Urban transformation governance entity, capital works and planning
- Southern Initiative: local strategy as sub-set of Auckland Plan
- business precinct plans: detailed policy planning for locations

Community programmes, initiatives and partnerships

Community programmes and initiatives play an important role in raising awareness and understanding of resource management issues. They also contribute to capacity building and public buy-in. This is particularly important for Unitary Plan objectives and policies that are new, have significantly changed policy direction or will require trade-offs. Examples of existing community programmes include:

- Environmental programmes
- Eco Design Advisor
- Home improvement programmes including Retrofit Your Home and solar water heating
- Working with groups such as Hauraki Gulf Forum, Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group, Manukau Forum and coast/landcare groups
- Restoration projects e.g. biodiversity and natural character (e.g. sea grass beds, mussel beds)

Technical publications, guidance documents and standards

These all play an important role in providing specialised or technical knowledge, in particular practical “how to” knowledge. This is invaluable for people at the pre-resource consent application stage and helps to reduce the compliance costs associated with consenting processes by improving the outcomes of proposals prior to their lodgement.

- Auckland Design Manual (ADM): a non-statutory document required under the Auckland Plan, this manual will rationalise existing design guidelines and provide a comprehensive approach. It will be a free on-line guide and web tool that provides advice, best practice processes and detailed design guidance. This will clarify what is expected from public and private

development in terms of quality design. The draft Unitary Plan outcomes; protecting historic heritage and character and ensuring a quality built environment will be supported by the ADM, in particular by providing guidance in the preparation of design statements.

- NZ Standards
- Best practice guidelines e.g. low impact stormwater design, land management

Financial incentives

Financial incentives can be in the form of funding from Council or as a reduction of fees payable to Council. These are made available in recognition that many privately owned resources or services have a wider public benefit and therefore seek to balance some of the financial burden. Council has a range of funds available to assist communities with projects and events that align with the Auckland Plan strategic directions. These range from preserving and recognising heritage features and stories from our communities to supporting environmental initiatives, community development, arts and events.

Currently the Regional Resource Consent Subsidy can be applied for by not-for-profit organisations to meet the cost of Air and Water resource consents. Under the operative District Plans some provisions provide for free or partly funded processing of applications for consents that involve a public benefit e.g. tree applications, heritage applications.