

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Warkworth Structure Plan

June 2019



Prepared by Brown NZ Ltd for Auckland Council

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Overview of the Warkworth Structure Plan Area & Landscape Recommendations	5
3. Review of the Structure Plan Zones	11
4. Review & Recommendations in Relation to Provisions	14
5. Evaluation Against Relevant Statutory Provisions	16
6. Conclusions	20

Introduction

Purpose and scope of the report

This is one of a number of reports that have been prepared for the Warkworth Structure Plan as part of the supporting information behind the structure plan document. This report outlines the existing environment in the study area with regards to Landscape, Natural Character and Amenity, and assesses the Warkworth Structure Plan in relation to these matters.

Study Area

The study area for the Warkworth Structure Plan is the Future Urban zone around Warkworth. It comprises around 1,000ha of land. The study area is shown outlined in red on Figure 1 below.

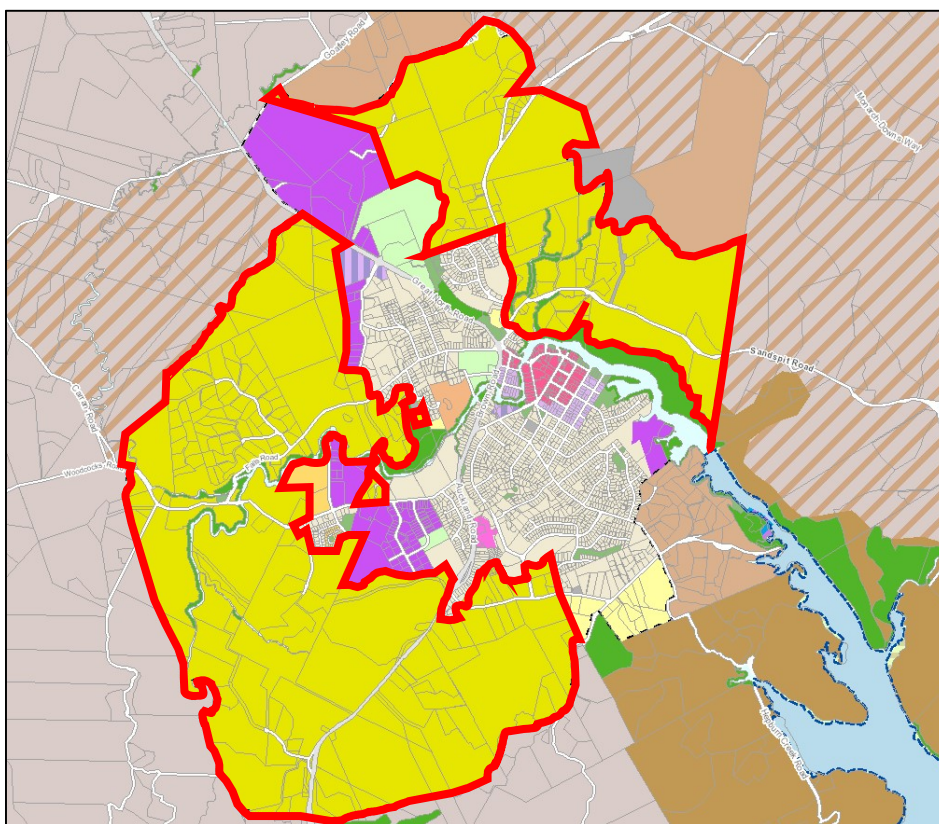


Figure 1: Warkworth structure plan study area (outlined in red)

Content

This report addresses the brief provided by Auckland Council in relation to the Warkworth Structure Plan Area which, in particular, requires assessment of the different land use types and locations from a landscape perspective, together with high level discussion about areas where controls for landscape might be required beyond the basic zone provisions.

As requested, that review has been undertaken and this report summarises my analysis of the proposed zoning (and related provisions) for the Warkworth Structure Plan area from a landscape standpoint. Accordingly, this report is subdivided into the following sections:

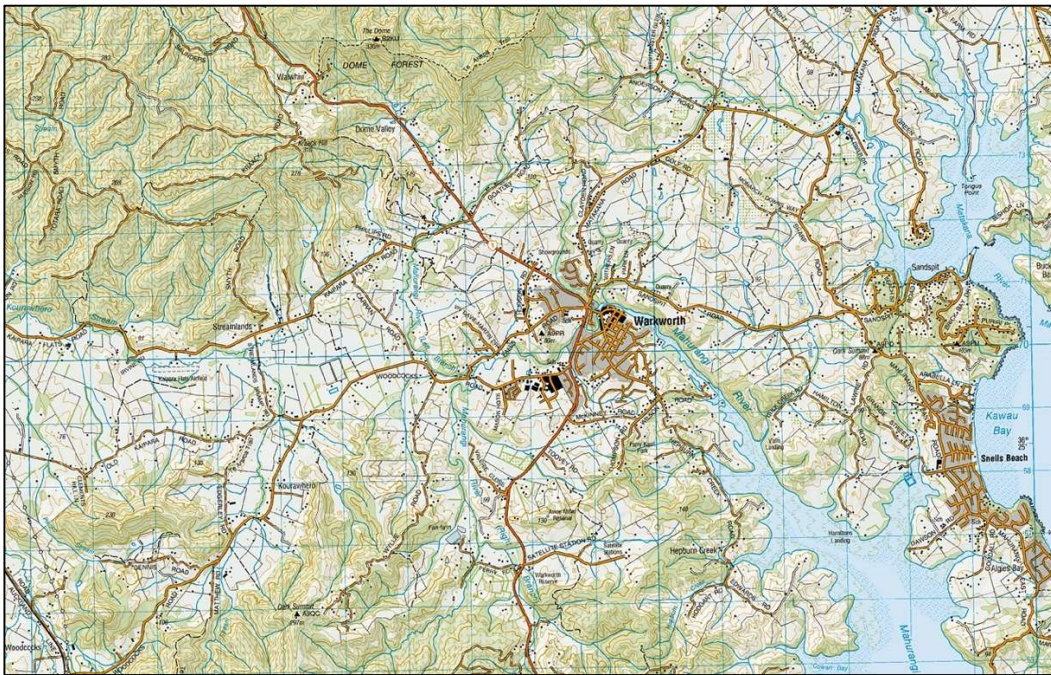
- Part 1:** Overview of the Warkworth Structure Plan Area and a summary of recommendations in relation to landscape values and sensitivities (from the April 2018 Landscape Topic Paper);
- Part 2:** Overview of the Warkworth Structure Plan and a review of its proposed zones in context of the landscape issues;

- Part 3:** Recommendations in relation to specific landscape based provisions / controls;
- Part 4:** Assessment of the Structure Plan Against Relevant Statutory Provisions; and
- Part 5:** Conclusions

Part 1:

Overview of The Warkworth Structure Plan Area

Warkworth sits at the edge of the Mahurangi River, a northern reach of the Mahurangi Harbour, and lies within a large topographic bowl that is framed to the north and south by the hill country and a mixture of both native and exotic production forests. The outer edges of this 'basin' culminate in the peaks of The Dome, Conical Peak and Mt Tamahunga to the north, while Moirs Hill is the main hill feature to the south, separating Warkworth from a complex valley system around Puhoi. Inland, the channelised valley of the Kaipara Flats extends towards the small peak of Clements Hill, then the much more layered and elevated sequence of hills and ridges that denote the Kaipara Hills and – further west Mt Auckland / Atuanui.



Topographic map of Warkworth and its surrounds



Relief map of Warkworth and its surrounds

In the closer vicinity of Warkworth's existing settlement, a mixture of more localised stream valleys and basins are intermixed with a rolling matrix of ridges and hills north, south and west of the Mahurangi River and current town centre. Patches of remnant bush dot these upland areas, while tracts of residual bush – often dominated by totara and kahikatea, but also kauri within the Falls catchment – follow the line of the major streams that feed into the Left and Right Branches of the upper Mahurangi River and their various tributaries. These culminate in several major stands of coastal forest / bush:

- spread along the main escarpment of the Mahurangi River facing the current township's commercial core and the sequence of waterfalls, rapids and sedimentary pavement that denote its transition into the smaller rivers described above;
- a sequence of mature totara and kahikatea at the centre of a broad catch basin near the Warkworth Showgrounds extending northward below Matakana Road;
- a sequence of totara dominated forest following the stream corridors immediately east of that same road;
- a complex mixture of kahikatea, kauri and totara either side of the Falls and its small weir, north of Woodcocks Road – to the west of the current township; and
- a corridor of totara and kahikatea following the Right Branch of the Mahurangi River from Woodcocks Road towards Perry Road and SH1 to the south.

These stands of native vegetation, together with others on more elevated ridges and hill slopes, contribute very markedly to Warkworth's endemic signature. They provide linear points or areas of focus within the individual catchments arrayed around the current township, have considerable aesthetic appeal in their own right and offer a feeling of linkage with the main body of the Mahurangi River and Harbour. They also lend each catchment feelings of naturalness and maturity that would otherwise be difficult to realise amid the open paddocks of grass and – near the showgrounds – sports fields.

At the centre of both this network and Warkworth's current urban area, the combination of mature forest overlooking the upper Mahurangi River, combined with its well defined, even intimate, river corridor, 'rapids' and falls, creates a landscape that is central to the township's enduring 'village' character and identity. It reinforces the town's feeling of being at the heart of a confined basin, while the development of a timber esplanade, grassed recreation areas and children's playground – all directly opposite the river escarpment and forest – creates an attractive interplay between the river's natural and cultural halves. The mooring of an old scow and other historic vessels next to the walkway reinforces this engagement, which is fundamental to Warkworth's appeal for locals and visitors alike. Consequently, a town that once largely turned its back on the Mahurangi River is increasingly realising the benefits of integration with this key landscape feature and asset. The river and escarpment are identified as an ONL in the AUP and will remain absolutely critical to the aesthetic appeal and ambience of Warkworth into the foreseeable future.

Elsewhere, much of the Structure Plan Area currently remains dominated by pasture, rural-residential blocks and – south of the township - the Ransom Vineyard. Around Thompson Road, this rural open space transitions into large tracts of bush just outside the study area that focus on Avice Miller Reserve (near Satellite Station Road) and Parry Kauri Park – near the junction of Thompson Road with Wilson Road. Large blocks of bush extend eastwards from this edge of the structure plan area towards the Mahurangi Harbour, although relatively few locations offer views towards the main body of the harbour. It is effectively isolated from nearly all of the study area. These stands of native forest provide the focus for a large ONL that wraps around the western side of the Mahurangi Harbour, along the ridge north of Satellite Station Road, then southwards towards the mouth of the Mahurangi Harbour and Waiwera.

On the opposite side of Warkworth, around Viv Davie Martin Drive, significant large lot / rural-residential development is already spread across the rolling to steep slopes that frame the Falls catchment, while smaller pockets of both rural-residential development and more conventional residential lots already straddle both sides of Matakana Road as it leaves the current township, heading northwards. A small

pocket of more historic, suburban housing is also located within the apex of Matakana Road and Clayden Road, but most of the remaining land within the catchments north to north-east of the current town centre still remain dominated by pastoral activities, notwithstanding the presence of the Warkworth Golf Club and Course (again, off Matakana Road) and the Rodney Coop Lime Quarry both just outside the study area.

These areas are interspersed with the tracts of native bush following stream corridors already described. In addition, at the southern SH1 entryway / gateway to Warkworth between Valerie Close and Toovey Road, as well as around Sandspit Road, the study area landscape is also notable for a complex matrix of lanes, accessways, properties and fields framed by Chinese poplars together with other poplar and willow species. These regimented stands of trees help to define, and attractively enclose, both main road corridors. They also help to screen houses, sheds and other structural elements within individual properties, and lend the landscape around the township a sense of remaining bucolic, rural and mature, even in quite close proximity to the current, rapidly changing town margins. As a result, they contribute appreciably to both the landscape character and amenity values of the wider study area and town.

The topographic margins of the study catchment are also defined by a number of other landscape features, including:

- The ridge that Wilson Road and Thompson Road run along;
- The prominent ridge that Viv Davie Martin Drive climbs up near the Falls;
- A knoll directly north of the Warkworth Showgrounds, merging with a significant ridgeline that extends towards Clayden Road and Matakana Road;
- Part of the Mahurangi River escarpment; and some smaller tributaries off the Right Branch of the Mahurangi River near Perry Road and lower Wyllie Road.

In places this definition is augmented by some of the stands of mature native forest already described – most notably at the end of Clayden Road and along Thompson Road extending through to Avicé Miller Reserve. Even so, much of the study area is less well defined to poorly defined down much of the length of the main Right Branch of the Mahurangi River south of Woodcocks Road, near SH1 and Goatley Road at the northern edge of the future town and either side of the Rodney Lime Quarry north of Sandspit Road. This creates potential problems in relation to the long term, definition and containment of growth around some parts of Warkworth's urban periphery.

It is also noteworthy that the proposed SH1 motorway designation, currently under construction, runs down part of the western RUB boundary near the Right Branch of the upper Mahurangi River and Wyllie Road. This will reinforce the division between 'town and country' at this interface in the future, notwithstanding the limited containment and definition of much of the western side of Warkworth in relation to natural features alone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

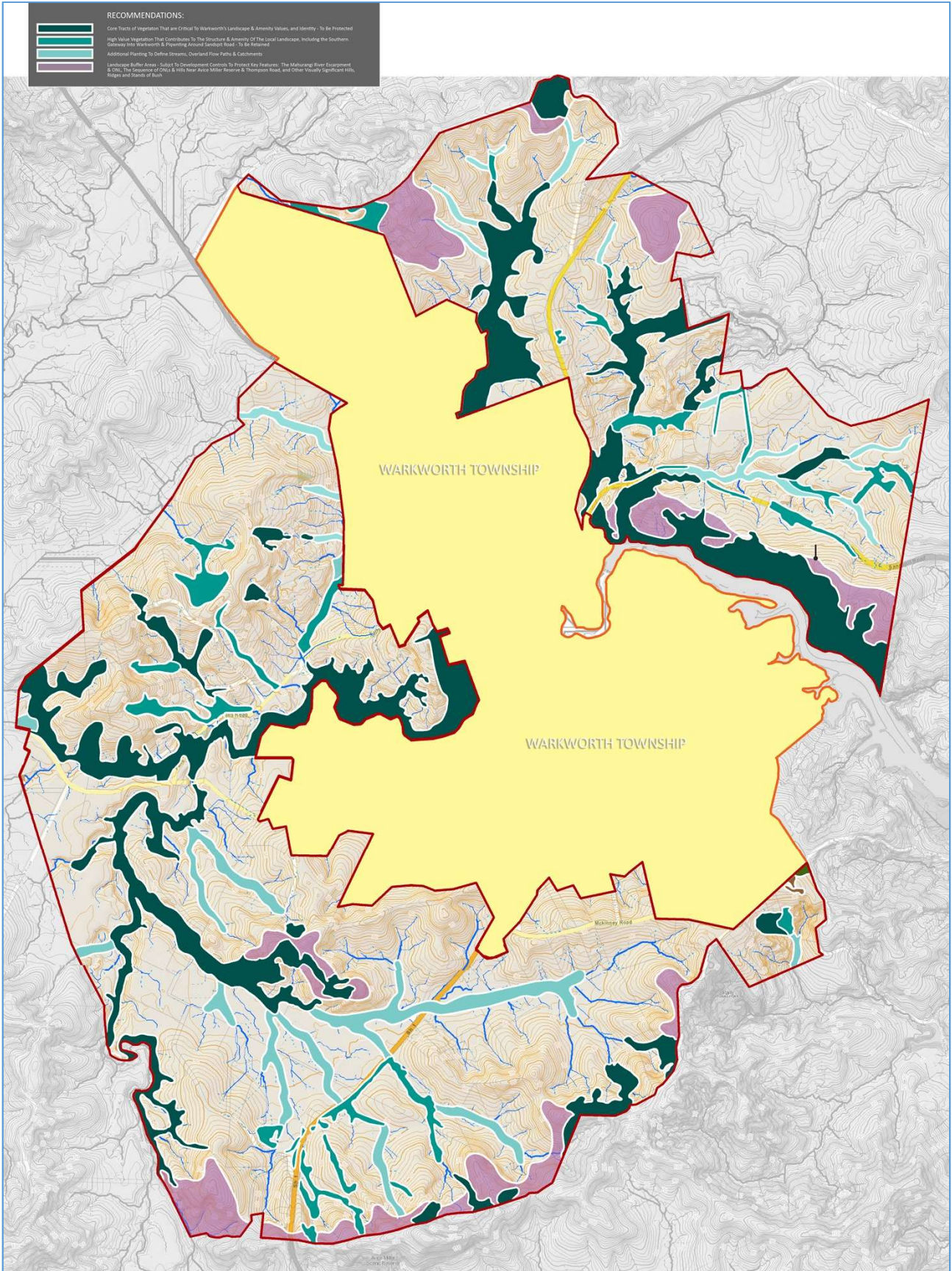
On the basis of a detailed analysis of Warkworth's landforms, vegetation cover, catchments, landscape values and amenity values, it was recommended that the Warkworth Structure Plan Area should incorporate the following broad strategy:

1. Future development should not encroach on or overlook the Mahurangi River escarpment and forest. Beyond simply protecting the margins of the bush and escarpment, this suggests that future development near Sandspit Road should be restricted in terms of its location and height so that it does not overlook the ONL or create a new skyline above and behind it. Although this sounds simple in principle, the fact that Warkworth's town centre and surrounding residential development steps up from the margins of the Mahurangi River makes the river catchment sensitive to new development 'peeking over' the ridgeline behind the escarpment. The escarpment

and its forest margins should be protected in relation to most such views (conceivably, from as high as Hexham Street or Coquette St), but cannot preclude a reasonable level of development beyond (north of) the main escarpment ridgeline.

2. Similar concerns apply to the ridgeline that separates the southern study area catchments from the valley around Satellite Station Road and its sequence of ONL forest remnants extending along the spine of the Thompson Road ridge towards Avice Miller Reserve. Again, future development should remain below the ridge crest when viewed from the general vicinity of Satellite Station Road.
3. Additionally, the small stand of bush at the end of Clayden Road is also quite exceptional in terms of its amalgam of forest species (kahikatea, kauri, totara, puriri, rimu, etc) and its location at the upper terminus of the valley catchment (no. 1) immediately west of Matakana Road. This stand should be maintained as both a key point of focus in its own right and as a potential point of connection with the totara / kahikatea forest following the stream corridor that extends northwards from the showgrounds.
4. Local topographic high points may lack the endemic value associated with forest remnants or cover, but remain important in terms of buffering such remnants and in terms of defining individual physical / stream / visual catchments – notably:
 - the northern margins of Catchments 1;
 - the distinctive round knoll at the northern edge of Catchment 2 next to Matakana Road;
 - the ridgeline that Viv Davie Martin Drive climbs up to, which defines the western to northern sides of Catchment 5;
 - the southern ridgeline flanks of Catchment 6 near Avice Miller Reserve;
 - the ridgeline and slopes around Thompson Road that define the eastern margins of Catchment 7; and
 - the ridge that Wilson Road runs along (and that the historic house ‘Riverina’ also sits on) which defines the smaller extent of Catchment 8.
 - the small knoll in the southern part of the study area.
5. The smaller stream courses and headwaters closer to the top of each catchment should ideally be protected and revegetated to:
 - Provide protection for and linkage to the headwaters area of each valley system / catchment;
 - Maintain a sense of connectivity between the valley floors and the hill tops and ridges that frame them;
 - Help define specific topographic features – described above;
 - Define a series of localities and neighbourhoods that have their own character, but which remain consistently framed by natural elements;
 - Enhance the aesthetic character and natural content of new areas of suburban development (or similar); and
 - Provide avenues for future physical connection through Warkworth’s developed areas – via footpaths, cycleways and public open space.
6. Some of the linear shelterbelts of Chinese Poplars and other exotic species – notably near Sandspit Road and near SH1 south of Toovey Road – should also be retained to:
 - maintain a feeling of separation between new development areas;

- to lend them a sense of being framed and attractively enclosed by greenery; and
- a sense of maturity within areas that will otherwise appear raw and devoid of natural elements in the short to medium term (indeed, such planting could be part of the signature of some new developments).



More specifically, it was considered that this strategy should involve:

Protection and Conservation of:

- **Figures 13 & 14** (above): The Mahurangi River Escarpment and forest within ONL 43, including its immediate ridge backdrop, and HNC Area 58 (perhaps by limiting future building footprints to locations at least 3-5m below the nearest ridgeline crest of the Mahurangi River 'escarpment');
- **Figures 13 & 14** (above): the primary stream corridors and associated stands of semi-mature, to mature, bush associated with the Right and Left Branches of the upper Mahurangi River and their major tributaries (including either side of the Falls), together with the stream corridors immediately east of the Warkworth Showgrounds and at the centre of the valley system between Sandspit and Matakana Roads;
- **Figures 13 & 15** (above): the significant stands of native forest near Clayden Road, Thompson Road and Avic Miller Reserve; and
- **Figure 14** (above): the more fragmented and variable stands of both native and exotic planting near Viv Davie Martin Drive

Retention as Far as Possible of:

- **Figure 13** (above): The hill-top knolls near the Warkworth Showgrounds, immediately east of Matakana Road and at the end of Clayden Road;
- **Figures 14 & 15** (above): The knoll crest immediately north of Ransom Vineyard; and
- **Figure 15** (above): The ridge crest at the southern edge of the structure plan stretching from south of the Ransom Vineyard to Thompson Road and Wilson Road; and
- **Figures 13 and 15** (above): the more mature stands of Chinese Poplar and other poplars near SH1 south of Toovey Road and framing / near Sandspit Road.

Retention as Open Space and Revegetation of:

- **Figure 13-15** (above): The stream margins not currently vegetated or partly vegetated abutting the Left and Right Branches of the Mahurangi River;
- **Figure 13** (above): The stream corridor west of Matakana Road and northeast of the Showgrounds;
- **Figure 13** (above): The main stream trunk in the valley between Matakana and Sandspit Roads; and
- **Figure 15** (above): The tributaries off the Right Branch of the Mahurangi River that stretch towards the Thompson Road ridgeline and Avic Miller Reserve.

Part 2:

Overview of the Warkworth Structure Plan & Review of the Structure Plan Zones in Relation to Landscape Issues

The Warkworth Structure Plan sets out the pattern of land uses and the supporting infrastructure networks for the Future Urban zoned land around Warkworth. In preparing the Warkworth Structure Plan, the following were considered:

- the context of the existing town in Warkworth
- the opportunities and constraints of the structure plan area as identified in 16 technical papers¹
- the feedback received from various stakeholders and public engagement events².

The structure plan is shown in Figure 2.

Some of the key high-level features of the Warkworth Structure Plan include:

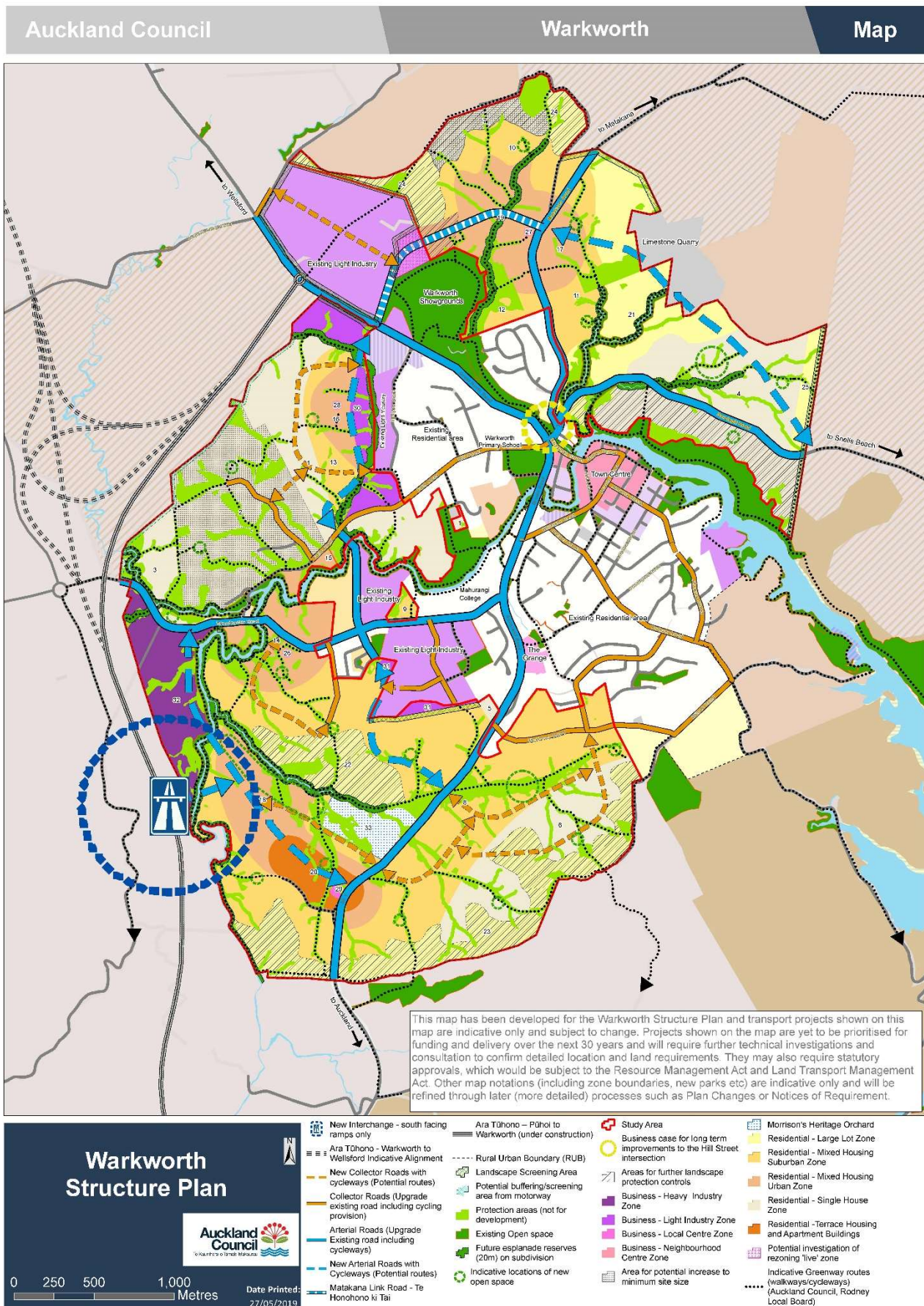
- Ecological and stormwater areas are set aside from any built urban development.
- The new residential areas across the Future Urban zone enable around 7,500 dwellings and offer a range of living types from spacious sections around the fringe to more intensive dwellings such as town houses and apartments around the new small centres and along public transport routes
- Warkworth's local and rural character is protected through various measures including provisions to protect the bush-clad town centre backdrop by the Mahurangi River and retaining the Morrisons orchard as a rural feature of the town.
- New employment areas are identified, comprising land for new industry (e.g. warehousing, manufacturing, wholesalers, repair services) and land for small centres (e.g. convenience retail, local offices, restaurants/cafés). The existing Warkworth town centre by the Mahurangi River will remain as the focal point of the town.
- The land uses are supported by infrastructure including:
 - A separated walking and cycling network providing connectivity to new and existing centres, employment areas, schools and public transport stations.
 - An arterial road network connected to a southern interchange on Ara Tūhono - Pūhoi to Warkworth, along with a possible collector road network.
 - A public transport network built upon the recently introduced 'New Network for Warkworth'. In the long term the network has a bus interchange in Warkworth's southern local centre and a Park and Ride near the southern interchange.
 - Other infrastructure such utilities, parks, schools, and community facilities have plans underway to service the planned growth of Warkworth.

Further details on the Warkworth Structure Plan can be found in the structure plan document on the project website.

¹ 16 topic papers that were prepared in February 2018 as part of initial consultation of the draft structure plan

² This includes feedback from mana whenua, business, resident and community groups, engagement survey findings and community workshops held to generate land use ideas for the Warkworth area.

Figure 2: Warkworth Structure Plan



Most of the zoning proposals are closely aligned or consistent with, the key recommendations of my April 2018 report. These areas of ‘congruence’ include the following:

Stream/ River Courses and Significant Vegetation:

- Identification of a **Protection Area** to part of the ridge backdrop behind the Mahurangi River escarpment;
- Incorporation of the Mahurangi River’s Right and Left Branches, and their vegetated margins in the 20m area identified as a **Future Esplanade** reserve;
- Expansion of this to cover other streams bodies and significant native vegetation in the **Protection Areas**, including the large swathe of kahikatea and other native vegetation northeast of the Warkworth Showgrounds; and
- Incorporation of the areas identified as “*Additional Areas to Define Streams, Overland Flow Paths & Catchments*” in my April report recommendations within the proposed **Protection Areas**

Landforms:

- Zoning of the elevated ridges, hills and knolls that define the outer edge of the catchment, together with those that (in the south) that are linked to Avice Miller Reserve, and (in the north) to the Warkworth Showgrounds – for **Residential Large Lot** development;
- Zoning of the large knoll, partly covered in native bush, within the southern half of the structure plan area overlooking Morrisons Orchard and Ransom Vineyard; and
- Identification of other natural ‘focal points’ and low points within individual catchments as **Possible Large Park Locations** – where they can be linked to stream corridors and existing vegetation.

Landscape, Natural Character & Amenity Values:

- Protection of the Outstanding Natural Landscape and area of High Natural Character associated with the Mahurangi River near Warkworth’s town centre, via identified **Protection Areas** described above;
- Concentration of development in general within the lower lying areas of the catchment, while generally utilising the more elevated landforms around the margins of the Structure Plan for **Residential Large Lot** zoning to help retain some of the open space, ‘green’ values that are fundamental to the town’s character and identity; and
- Retention of a broad network of rivers, streams, stands of bush and significant landforms through the application of **Protection Areas**, **Future Esplanade zoning** and **Residential Large Lot** zoning so that these features continue permeate the entire catchment and remain a visual hallmark or Warkworth into the future.

Even so, some areas of concern remain in relation to the proposed zoning, two of which go beyond the simple protection of existing landscape features:

Areas of Concern:

- That the **Residential Large Lot** zones may not retain sufficient open space to protect the ridges, knolls and stands of bush mostly on the outer margins of the Structure Plan area as coherent and sustainable, physical bodies, and that they may also fail to provide a true sense of true transition into surrounding rural areas, while also becoming relatively inefficient, ‘low density suburban’ environments. This is also potentially an issue in relation to a large knoll, partly covered in native

bush, within the southern half of the structure plan area near Morrisons Orchard and Ransom Vineyard. This large knoll is a significant local feature.

- Warkworth's identity and overall amenity currently benefits from the passage through quite verdant gateways at both ends of the town – on SH1 and Sandspit / Matakana Roads. The current proposals would instead result in both the main SH1 'gateway' and Falls Rd entrance being through, or past, industrial areas, which would, inevitably, change public and local perceptions of the town. It is therefore highly desirable that some sort of buffering or sleeving is adopted to manage, and reduce the effects of, industrial location next to both entryways: this may require areas of open space and planting to be set aside that are large enough to effectively screen such development: these would need to be in the order of 20-30m deep to accommodate mature native trees in the long term.
- Finally, the Structure Plan shows Single House zoning extending from near Hudson Road to the edge of the SH1 corridor running west to north of Viv Davie Martin Drive. Future development within the valley system and slopes found in these areas would interact very directly with the new highway. In particular, the strong visual focus arising from the valley landform enclosing the highway, combined with close physical proximity to its corridor, would be accentuated by awareness of traffic noise and movement. Consideration needs to be given to mitigation of such effects – through buffering and sleeving at the edge of the highway, and also via supplementary measures taken within this future residential sector.

Part 3:

Review & Recommendations in Relation to Zoning Provisions

I have already raised the issue of the Residential Large Lot provisions. From a landscape / amenity standpoint, these remain critical in relation to protecting:

- key hills, knolls and ridgelines;
- stands of bush;
- the sense of transition from urban Warkworth into surrounding rural areas (subject to Rural Production, Mixed Rural, and Coastal Rural zones, together with Countryside Living); and
- the feeling that Warkworth's urban area is still framed by natural features, both on its periphery and, in places, within the Structure Plan area.

In this regard, it is considered critical that the remnant stands of mature bush within the Residential Large Lot (RLL) zone are subject to protection in their own right (beyond just a more spacious residential environment) and that the RLL provisions make provision for a minimum lot size of 4000m². In reality, even this may not be enough to protect the qualities currently associated with the Structure Plan area's margins, in particular. Requiring at least 25% of each subdivided lot to be planted in native species and controls over the colour and materials of dwellings constructed within the RLL zone would at least help to soften the profile of such development and integrate / link the stands of native vegetation already found within these areas.

Similar controls would also be appropriate in relation to the large knoll near Ransom Vineyard and Morrisons Orchard.

In relation to the other 'Areas of Concern' identified it is recommended that consideration be given to:

- establishing amenity buffers between the proposed industrial development next to two future 'gateway's to Warkworth, with these being sizeable enough (approximately 20-30m deep) to accommodate the growth of mature, native forest species - like kahikatea, kauri, pohutukawa, puriri and totara – in the long term; and
- that consideration be given to requiring a similar buffer between residential development and the SH1 corridor near Viv Davie Martin Drive.

Another key area of concern in relation to Warkworth's landscape and amenity values is the protection of its most iconic landscape feature: the Mahurangi River and its forested, north-bank, margins. Both the ridge along the northern side of the river and its native bush cover should help to limit the exposure of development just over the escarpment. However, as was described in my April 2018 report, it may well be possible for new development to emerge that is visible above and beyond both the river and its escarpment. To ensure that this does not occur it was recommended in my previous report that limitations might be imposed on future building footprints north of the ONL and Open Space zone so that such development is restricted to locations *"at least 3-5m vertically below the nearest ridgeline crest of the Mahurangi River 'escarpment'"*.

Having reviewed this suggestion, I still think that this control should be applied – with a 5m vertical limit – to the **Residential Single House** and **Residential Large Lot** zones north of the Mahurangi River escarpment and ONL. Alternatively, development could be allowed closer to the ridge provided that surveyed measurements verify that the proposed development would not be visible from within the **Business - Town Centre** or **Business - Mixed Use** zones south of the river, and that such screening would be achieved because of the profile of the escarpment / ridge above the Mahurangi River, rather than from existing vegetation cover (which can come and go over time).

Part 4:

Assessment Against Relevant Statutory Provisions

The Structure Plan has also been reviewed in relation to the following key matters:

- The Warkworth Structure Plan Principles;
- Matters identified in the Structure Plan Guidelines (Appendix 1 of the Unitary Plan);
- Relevant National Policy Statements – in this instance, the NZ Coastal Policy Statement 2010; and
- Relevant provisions in the Regional Policy Statement.

I have considered the Structure Plan in relation to these matters and comment on them as follows:

The Warkworth Structure Plan Principles:

The Warkworth Structure Plan Principles that are most directly relevant to landscape and amenity values are as follows:

The Mahurangi River is the jewel in Warkworth's crown

- *Protect the Mahurangi River from the effects of urbanisation as a matter of paramount importance in the development of the Future Urban zone*
- *Use the development of the Future Urban zone to improve the health and quality of the Mahurangi River wherever possible*
- *Treat all the tributaries in the Future Urban zone as being vital to the health of the Mahurangi River*

Character and identity

- *Celebrate and protect Warkworth's heritage, both Maori and European, and its relationship with mana whenua*
- *Retain the current town centre as the focal point and 'beating heart' of Warkworth*
- *Protect the views from the current town centre to the bush clad northern escarpment of the Mahurangi River and the rural views out from the Future Urban zone that contribute to Warkworth's rural character*
- *Apply lower density residential zones to areas valued for their landscape, character, or heritage significance*
- *Use the Future Urban zone efficiently to protect against the need for further urban expansion into Warkworth's valued rural hinterland*

Sustainability and natural heritage

- *Plan to enable development of the Future Urban zone to be sustainable, including having a compact urban form, providing local employment options, enabling extensive active and public transport routes, and minimising discharges to air and water bodies*
- *Design the Future Urban zone to be able to adapt to the effects of climate change*
- *Protect and enhance existing bush/natural areas and create ecological corridors linking the Future Urban zone to other ecological areas*

Quality built urban environment

- *Design the Future Urban zone to enable high-quality and integrated urban development that reinforces the town's identity*
- *Locate higher density residential areas around appropriate amenities*
- *Provide well located and accessible areas of open space linked by a green network of walking and cycling trails along the streams*
- *Outside open space areas, use urban trees (e.g. street trees) and vegetation to enhance the amenity of the built environment*

These principles are consistent with the findings of my April report. Insofar as my review findings in Parts 2 and 3 of this report indicate that the Structure is consistent with the recommendations of that

report, it is my opinion that the Structure Plan is also consistent with the Structure Plan Principles outlined above.

Matters identified in the Structure Plan Guidelines (Appendix 1 of the Unitary Plan):

Appendix 1 of the Unitary Plan describes the following matters as being relevant to the Warkworth Structure Plan (focusing on landscape, natural character and amenity issues):

1.4.2. Natural resources

- (1) *The protection, maintenance and enhancement of natural resources, particularly those that have been scheduled in the Unitary Plan in relation to Mana Whenua, natural resources, and the coastal environment.*
- (2) *Demonstrate how proposed subdivision, use, and development will protect, maintain and enhance the values of the resources identified in 1.4.2(1) above.*

1.4.3. Natural and built heritage

- (1) *The existence of natural and physical resources that have been scheduled in the Unitary Plan in relation to natural heritage, Mana Whenua, natural resources, coastal environment, historic heritage and special character.*

1.5. Specialist documents to support the structure plan and plan changes process

The scale and detail of the investigation and reporting required needs to be at a level appropriate to the scale of the area subject to the structure planning process and the complexity of the issues identified by the process. Reports may be required on the matters listed below to support the structure planning and plan change process:

- (3) *Impact on natural and cultural values:*
 - (a) *landscape assessment;*

In my opinion, the Structure Plan largely complies with these principles. The only areas of 'doubt' in this regard relate to the matters discussed in Part 3 of this report.

Relevant National Policy Statements – the NZ Coastal Policy Statement 2010:

Policy 13 of the NZ Coastal Policy Statement states that:

- (1) *To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and to protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*
..... and
- (b) *avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment;*

It is my assessment that the proposed zoning would avoid generating significant adverse effects in relation to the area of High Natural Character Values identified within and around the Mahurangi River (HNC Area 58), provided additional controls are imposed on development within the residential zones north of the river – as discussed above.

Relevant provisions in the Regional Policy Statement:

In much the same vein, it is my opinion that the proposed zoning around the Mahurangi River, would preserve the characteristics and qualities of the area of High Natural Character (No. 58) that covers the Mahurangi River, together with its immediate margins, near Warkworth's town centre. This accords with Section 6(a) of the Resource Management Act and relevant RPS provisions, including:

B8.2. Natural character B8.2.1. Objectives

- (1) *Areas of the coastal environment with outstanding and high natural character are preserved and protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*
- (2) *Subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment are designed, located and managed to preserve the characteristics and qualities that contribute to the natural character of the coastal environment.*

B8.2.2. Policies

- (3) *Preserve and protect areas of outstanding natural character and high natural character from inappropriate subdivision, use and development by:*
 - (a) *avoiding adverse effects of activities on natural character in areas of the coastal environment scheduled as outstanding natural character; and*
 - (b) *avoiding significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment.*

Furthermore, it is my opinion that the proposed zoning, supplemented by additional controls over residential development north of the Mahurangi River, would also protect the characteristics and values of Outstanding Natural Landscape 43, which captures the Mahurangi River, together with its northern escarpment, near Warkworth's town centre. This protection is in accordance with Section 6(b) of the Resource Management Act and relevant RPS provisions, including:

B4.2. Outstanding natural features and landscapes B4.2.1. Objectives

- (1) *Outstanding natural features and landscapes are identified and protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*
- (2) *The ancestral relationships of Mana Whenua and their culture and traditions with the landscapes and natural features of Auckland are recognised and provided for.*
- (3) *The visual and physical integrity and the historic, archaeological and cultural values of Auckland's volcanic features that are of local, regional, national and/or international significance are protected and, where practicable, enhanced.*

B4.2.2. Policies

- (3) *Protect the physical and visual integrity of Auckland's outstanding natural landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*

Conclusions

Overall, it is my opinion that the Warkworth Structure Plan is consistent with the findings and recommendations of my April 2018 landscape assessment report, and with relevant statutory documents and provisions.

It is my opinion that the matters identified as areas of concern on pages 13 and 14 of this report are appropriately addressed in the Warkworth Structure Plan.

Stephen Brown

BTP, Dip LA, Fellow NZILA

Registered Landscape Architect



Find out more: phone **09 301 0101**
or visit **shapeauckland.co.nz**