

B1. Ngā take matua ā-rohe – Issues of regional significance

B1.1. Statutory framework

The statutory framework for the Auckland regional policy statement is in sections 59 to 62 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

The purpose of the regional policy statement is to achieve the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 by providing:

- (1) an overview of the resource management issues of the region; and
- (2) policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region.

The regional policy statement must be prepared in accordance with:

- (1) the Auckland Council's functions as a regional council and as a territorial authority under sections 30 and 31 of the Resource Management Act 1991;
- (2) the provisions of Part 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991; and
- (3) the requirement to complete an evaluation report in accordance with section 32 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

As well, the Council must:

- (1) have regard to other relevant statutory planning documents and regulations as set out in section 61(2) and (2A) of the Resource Management Act 1991; and
- (2) not have regard to trade competition or the effects of trade competition.

B1.2. Relationship with other statutory documents

The Auckland Plan, being the spatial plan required to be prepared and adopted under sections 79 and 80 of the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009 as a comprehensive and effective long-term (20- to 30-year) strategy for Auckland's growth and development, is a relevant statutory planning document for the preparation of the regional policy statement.

The regional policy statement must give effect to any national policy statement and to the New Zealand coastal policy statement. It must not be inconsistent with any water conservation order. It must not conflict with sections 7 and 8 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 and treat those provisions as a New Zealand coastal policy statement. It must give effect to the purpose of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 and the objectives of the heritage area.

The other provisions of the Unitary Plan (the regional (including coastal) and district objectives, policies and rules) must give effect to the regional policy statement. They must also not conflict with sections 7 and 8 of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 and treat those provisions as a New Zealand coastal policy statement. They must also give effect to the purpose of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 and the objectives of the heritage area.

‘Give effect’ means ‘implement’. It is a strong directive. The hierarchy of policy statements and plans under the Resource Management Act 1991 makes it important that objectives and policies at a higher level are given effect at every lower level. This enables the Council to establish, implement and review the objectives, policies, and methods in the Unitary Plan to achieve integrated management of natural and physical resources and of the effects of the use, development, or protection of land.

It is therefore important that the provisions of the regional policy statement are read as a whole, so that all relevant provisions are considered together and in context.

B1.3. Content of the regional policy statement

The regional policy statement must state:

- (1) the significant resource management issues for the Auckland region;
- (2) the resource management issues of significance to iwi authorities in the Auckland region;
- (3) the objectives sought to be achieved;
- (4) the policies for those issues and objectives and an explanation of those policies;
- (5) the methods (excluding rules) to be used to implement the policies;
- (6) the principal reasons for adopting the objectives, policies, and methods of implementation;
- (7) the environmental results anticipated from implementation of those policies and methods;
- (8) the processes to be used to deal with issues that cross local authority boundaries and issues between regions;
- (9) the procedures used to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies and methods; and
- (10) any other information required for the purpose of the Council’s functions, powers, and duties under the Resource Management Act 1991.

B1.4. Issues of regional significance

The significant resource management issues for the Auckland region relate to:

- (1) urban growth and form;
- (2) infrastructure, transport and energy;
- (3) built heritage and character;
- (4) natural heritage (landscapes, natural features, volcanic viewshafts and trees);
- (5) issues of significance to Mana Whenua;

- (6) natural resources;
- (7) the coastal environment;
- (8) the rural environment; and
- (9) environmental risk.

The regional policy statement sets out the issues for each of these topics in separate sections.

B1.5. Objectives and policies

The objectives and policies are set out in the sections of the regional policy statement following the issues to which they relate.

The regional policy statement must be read as a whole. If an issue relates to more than one section, then the relevant objectives and policies in each section must be read together. For example, issues concerning urban growth in the coastal environment will involve consideration of sections [B2 Urban Growth](#) and [B8 Coastal environment](#).

B1.6. Methods

The Unitary Plan uses a range of regulatory and non-regulatory methods to implement the objectives and policies in the regional policy statement. Table 1 below provides a summary of those methods. In addition, each section within the regional policy statement identifies specific methods within the categories below.

Table B1.6.1. Summary of methods to implement the regional policy statement

Regulatory	
Unitary Plan (Refer to Chapter A – Introduction for details)	Overlay objectives, policies and rules
	Auckland-wide objectives, policies and rules
	Zone objectives, policies and rules
	Precinct objectives, policies and rules
	Structure plan guidelines – Appendix 1
	Rural Urban Boundary
	Schedules for overlays
	Appendices
	Unitary Plan planning maps for overlays, Auckland-wide controls, zones controls and precincts
	Designations
Bylaws	Refer to Auckland Council and Auckland Transport websites for details of bylaws

Statutory controls under other legislation	• Reserve management plans under the Reserves Act 1977 • The Local Government (Auckland Regional Parks) Order 2008 • National Code of Practice for Utility Operators' Access to Transport Corridors under the Utilities Access Act 2010 • New Zealand Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances 2001 under the Electricity Act 1992
Non-regulatory	
Statutory plans and strategies	• Auckland Plan under the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009 • Long-term Plan under the Local Government Act 2002 • Regional Land Transport Plan under the Land Transport Management Act 2003
Non-regulatory plans and strategies	Strategies, policies and plans which guide use and development in Auckland such as: • planning documents recognised by iwi authorities of Mana Whenua • Housing Action Plan • local area plans • local board plans • Auckland Conservation Management Strategy and conservation management plans • City Centre Master Plan • parks and open spaces policies and plans • Historic Heritage Plan • Indigenous Biodiversity Strategy • centres plans and strategies on infrastructure • transport programmes, plans and strategies by Auckland Transport • memoranda of understanding and interagency agreements including with infrastructure providers and Mana Whenua • marine spatial planning documents • regional pest management plan • quarry management plans • civil defence and emergency management plans • catchment management plans • waste minimisation strategy

Advocacy and education	Programmes and toolkits that provide people and communities with information to increase their understanding on a particular subject such as: • sustainability • urban and building design – Auckland Design Manual • pest animals and weeds and biosecurity • resource consent processing guidance • environmental education • Mana Whenua values and engagement and consultation with Mana Whenua • undergrounding of transmission lines in the urban area • liaison with road controlling authorities and infrastructure providers • cultural heritage inventory • GIS-based alert layers for heritage resources and values • education on the benefits of urban trees and vegetation and design guidelines for their retention in development • education on risk issues associated with natural hazards, hazardous substances and hazardous facilities
Monitoring and information gathering	Ongoing gathering of information to ensure policy is based on robust research such as: • state of the environment monitoring • growth projections and capacity studies • development capacity and land supply • resource consent monitoring including consented planning applications by Mana Whenua kaitiaki • heritage identification, evaluation and registry • natural hazards register • terrestrial biodiversity monitoring programme • active management of council-owned contaminated land • collection of information about contaminated land • water quality and stormwater monitoring • modelling effects of climate changes on areas susceptible to natural hazards
Funding and assistance	Financial or other mechanisms to implement and support policies such as: • grants • reducing or waiving resource consent application fees • development contributions • targeted rates • rates relief

	• heritage incentives and assistance • heritage acquisition fund • funding for restoration programmes/planting • funding for tree retention programmes
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B1.7. Explanation and principal reasons for adoption

The explanation of the policies and the principal reasons for adopting the objectives, policies, and methods of implementation are set out in the relevant sections of the regional policy statement.

B1.8. Environmental results anticipated

The Resource Management Act 1991 requires the regional policy statement to state the environmental results anticipated from the implementation of the policies and methods. Environmental results anticipated identify the outcomes expected as a result of implementing the policies and methods and provide the basis for monitoring of the Plan. Environmental results anticipated therefore need to be measureable and provide the indicator that will be used when assessing progress in achieving the objectives in the regional policy statement. Refer to B1.10 and [B11](#) for further details.

B1.9. Inter-regional and cross-boundary issues

Neighbouring local authorities are Northland Regional Council and Kaipara District Council to the north and Waikato Regional Council and Waikato and Hauraki District Councils in the south. The Resource Management Act 1991 requires the regional policy statement to state the process that will be used to resolve or manage cross-boundary issues. Issues which affect Auckland and its neighbouring councils are stated below.

- (1) Population growth. The alignment of regional and local growth management strategies within the upper North Island, in particular between Auckland, Northland and Waikato, to provide an integrated approach to accommodating future population growth among the cities, towns and settlements in these areas.
- (2) Transport linkages. The alignment of transport planning across the upper North Island. This includes recognising and facilitating the different transport linkages between Auckland, Northland and Waikato. This is in terms of people and freight movement, the use and expansion of the roading and passenger transport network and maintaining accessibility to Auckland International Airport and Ports of Auckland as multi-regional transport nodes.
- (3) Economic development. Supporting economic development in both urban and rural parts of the three regions and facilitating the movement of goods, services and employees across Auckland's administrative boundaries. This includes the role of the Waikato region's infrastructure and its mineral/aggregate industry in supporting the growth of Auckland.
- (4) Natural environment. The natural environment does not recognise local government administrative boundaries. Consistent cross-boundary approaches

are important for the management of natural resources such as the coastal environment, particularly the Kaipara Harbour and the Hauraki Gulf, indigenous biodiversity, weed and pest control and management of water takes from aquifers and streams that flow between regions.

The Council will use a number of processes to manage or resolve cross-boundary issues. Many of these processes operate outside the statutory framework of the Resource Management Act 1991, but provide opportunities for both political and technical discussion of important issues and the development of agreed outcomes, which can be subsequently reflected in Resource Management Act 1991 documents. These processes also reflect that there are a broad range of stakeholders that will need to be involved in resolving cross-boundary issues.

Processes include:

- (1) strategies, policies and processes set out in the Auckland Plan;
- (2) participation in the following bodies to address the management of cross-boundary issues:
 - (a) Hauraki Gulf Forum;
 - (b) integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group;
 - (c) joint Kaipara Harbour Political Working Party;
 - (d) Upper North Island Strategic Alliance Agreement; and
 - (e) regional planners' forum;
- (3) consultation requirements of Schedule 1 to the Resource Management Act 1991, relating to the preparation and change of policy statements and plans by local authorities;
- (4) participation in joint policy and research projects e.g. Marine Spatial Plans for Hauraki Gulf and Kaipara Harbour;
- (5) technical co-operation on research and monitoring projects and the development of environmental indicators; and
- (6) cross-boundary notification of significant resource consent applications and participation in joint hearing processes.

B1.10. Monitoring the policies and methods

Section 35 of the Resource Management Act 1991 requires the Council to monitor:

- (1) the state of the environment;
- (2) the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, rules and other methods contained within the Unitary Plan; and
- (3) the exercise of resource consents.

Monitoring of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Unitary Plan will be integrated with the state of the environment monitoring and will include:

- (1) regular monitoring of resource conditions such as water quality and soil;
- (2) identification and understanding of pressures exerted on resources at selected sites across Auckland;
- (3) targeted investigations;
- (4) information on resource consents, such as resource use, location, and extent of use; and
- (5) implementation of resource consents.

The Council has a monitoring programme which has been developed to promote integrated management of natural and physical resources and track indicators of progress and change across Auckland. Monitoring takes place across Auckland of the built environment, economic performance, transport, natural environment, heritage, and hazards. This data provides information on trends, opportunities and constraints within Auckland. It is used to help develop strategies, policies and plans and support decision-making. Findings from monitoring are reported in annual state of the environment report cards.

The Council collects evidence-based material such as technical reports, publications, and technical papers on a wide variety of subjects. The Council also gathers information on the natural and physical environment, economics, land use and built environment, and social and cultural and demographic statistics. The Council recognises the value of using cultural indicators for monitoring, such as the Cultural Health Index for Streams and Waterways developed by the Ministry for the Environment, where appropriate.

B1.11. Plan review

The Council may change the Unitary Plan when:

- (1) monitoring shows the need to improve achievement of anticipated environmental results; or
- (2) major changes to the resource management regime arise, such as significant amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991, or the approval of national policy statements, or the making of regulations prescribing national environmental standards that affect the contents of the Unitary Plan; or
- (3) advances in science allow plan provisions to be made more certain; or
- (4) there is a need to address new or changing needs or issues of importance to Auckland.

Changes to the regional policy statement provisions in the Unitary Plan can only be initiated by a Minister of the Crown or the Council.

Changes to the regional or district plan provisions in the Unitary Plan may be requested by any person. The process used to review and change the Unitary Plan is set out in Schedule 1 to the Resource Management Act 1991.