

introduction

Achieving environmental sustainability is a central strategic goal of Waitakere City Council, a goal which is reflected in its Strategic Plan and Greenprint. In adopting this goal the Council is building upon the initiatives of the City's residents. Many of their actions show a commitment to the local environment and a wish to protect and sustain it for future generations.

This document, the District Plan, is part of that tradition and is intended to extend further the community's vision of sustainable management of its future. Unlike the other documents, the District Plan is a creature of statute, which Waitakere City Council is required by the 1991 Resource Management Act to produce.

The purpose of the Resource Management Act is to achieve sustainable management of natural and physical resources, and to carry out this purpose the District Plan must set out how the actual or potential impacts of activities on resources will be managed. In addition to any other methods which might be used, the Act also confers the power to make rules to manage any adverse effects. These rules have the force of law, giving the community the ability to manage people's activities where they affect the environment.





Thus the District Plan addresses two matters:

- how the effects of activities will be managed;
- the rules which are adopted to help manage these effects.

The District Plan is divided into three parts:

- the Policy Section,
- the Rules Section,
- the Maps Section.

The Policy Section

provides a statement of the District Plan's approach to the management of effects on natural and physical resources, and an integrated overview of the Plan's approach to what is a complex and multi-faceted exercise. It identifies the significant resource management issues of the district, the objectives sought by the Plan and the policy direction chosen in response to these issues and objectives. It also describes the methods which will be used to carry out the policies, and the principal reasons for adopting the particular objectives, policies and methods. However, although it describes the range of rules adopted, it does not set these out in detail. The detailed rules are provided in the Rules Section of the District Plan.

The Rules Section

provides residents with the detailed rules which will guide their actions in relation to the City's diverse environments. A summary of the objectives and policies already contained in this section. Each rule is cross-referenced Policy so that the reasoning behind it is clear and can be fully understood.

The Maps Section

sets out the Natural Areas and Human Environments, sites and features to which the rules apply. For each area of the City there are two maps. The Natural Areas Maps set out the areas and sites to which the rules managing impacts of activities on natural and physical resources apply. The Human Environments Maps set out the Human Environments, sites and features to which rules managing impacts of activities on sustainable city form, on human health, amenity and heritage values apply.

Forty-five local plans are also provided which summarise the key issues, objectives, policies and rules for a particular area. Local Plans have no legal status but are intended to provide residents with an easy-to-use alternative to the District Plan which is relevant to their area. If users want to obtain a more comprehensive picture of what is intended for the whole City, they should refer to the Policy Section of the District Plan.

1.1 POLICY SECTION: STRUCTURE

This section of the District Plan is structured in the following way.

Chapter 1

(Introduction)

Chapter 2

(A Sustainable Future)

discusses the context for developing the District Plan. This includes: Agenda 21 and Council's philosophy of environmental management; the statutory context of the Resource Management Act and the Treaty of Waitangi; a summary of other relevant planning documents and the specific responsibilities of territorial local authorities.

Chapter 3

(The City's Environment)

describes the City's environment in all its aspects - the natural and physical resources, natural processes, the human community, the environment's spiritual dimension, its valued resources, landscapes and heritage.

Chapter 4

(Tangata Whenua)

provides a background to iwi concerns including a brief history provided by each iwi, their views on the environment and a brief statement of resource management issues as they understand them.

Chapter 5

(Significant Resource Management Issues & The Response: Objectives, Policies and Methods)

sets out the significant resource management issues facing the City and those effects on the environment that require a response. This overview of issues is pivotal to the District Plan and, in particular, to the subsequent rules. These rules directly address the various effects, according to the direction set out by the objectives and policies. A summary of relevant effects outlined in this part prefaces every rule set out in the Rules Section of the District Plan and the Local Plans.

Also sets out a programme of objectives and policies that have been adopted in relation to particular resources and values placed on the environment. In addition, it describes the range of methods that have been adopted to carry out these objectives and policies, and the environmental outcomes that are expected in relation to each resource and aspect of the environment. With each objective and policy, an explanation and principal reason for the adoption of the particular approach is provided.

Chapter 6

(Explanation of the Strategic Direction)

provides a further explanation of a number of key policies and groupings of policies, which, when considered together, comprise an integrated, comprehensive response to the effects, problems and key decisions that face the City.

The resulting structure of the document provides links between the City's environment, significant resource management issues affecting it, and the management decisions adopted as a response. It provides a guide to the adoption of methods and, in particular, the rules set out in the Rules Section of the Plan.

Waitakere City Council's commitment to making decisions in partnership with an informed and involved community, means that the environmental policy document provides as much information about the City's environment as possible - as a basis for community understanding of the need for environmental management and the decisions that have been made. It is recognised that an improved environment largely depends on the day- to-day actions of the City's business people and residents. This includes attitudes to resource use (for example, water, waste energy), and to protecting the bush and landscape, and a willingness to use fewer harmful substances, such as solvents and pesticides, in everyday life.

The District Plan documents are also supported by a range of research papers, maps and inventories of information that provide a valuable resource for the community. These documents are available to residents for their information.

Increasingly, the community faces key choices about the future - choices about how people can live more harmoniously with the natural world, and the type of society that will promote that harmony. This District Plan is another step in the shift towards a sustainable future, and a chance to live in an environment that is safe and healthy in all its aspects.

