



Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment Policy Review

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Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment Policy Review

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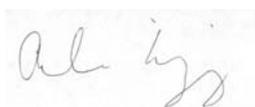
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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The Auckland and Northland Regional Councils have identified the integrated management of the Kaipara Harbour (the Harbour) and its coastal environment as an important issue.

A recommendation of the August 2005 meeting of the Northern Inter-Regional Committee was that a formal working relationship between the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) and the Northland Regional Council (NRC) be put in place and that a scoping report be prepared to address the management issues of the Kaipara Harbour.

A scoping report on the integrated management was prepared by the ARC. This report set out a sequence of actions to determine what commitments needed to be made by each council (jointly and individually) to enable progress towards achieving integrated management. A review of relevant statutory policy and planning documents is one of the key actions to come out of the report findings. The purpose of this exercise is to determine how consistent the policy and plan documents are and whether they enable integrated management and appropriately address cross boundary issues for management of the Harbour.

As part of this process, the ARC and NRC have commissioned Beca to undertake a review of the statutory policy and planning documents relevant to the coastal environment of the Kaipara Harbour.

The ARC has also commissioned ASR (Marine Consulting and Research) to undertake a review of environmental information on the Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment. The preliminary findings of the draft report for this study (July 2007) have been supplied to Beca to assist in the understanding of the effectiveness of the current policy provisions and methods of implementation.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Statutory management of the Kaipara Harbour is divided due to its large geographical extent and multiple governing jurisdictions of the ARC, NRC, Rodney District Council (RDC) and Kaipara District Council (KDC). A review of the different provisions of the various statutory documents relevant to the management of the coastal environment of the Harbour is required in order to determine the consistency of approach and assess the likelihood of delivering similar environmental outcomes. This study will also provide recommendations on achieving integrated management and addressing cross boundary issues.

1.3 Scope of the Analysis

The scope of this study includes:

- ❑ The identification of the statutory planning and policy documents relevant to the Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment (KHCE);
- ❑ Explanation of each document's jurisdiction, status, review timeframe and their statutory relationship to each other;
- ❑ A description of the policy outcomes sought by all documents with comments on key differences in approach and the likelihood of the outcomes being achieved;
- ❑ An analysis of the consistency of policy direction across the documents with comment on differences, the significance of difference and the reason for any differences;
- ❑ Determination on whether the documents meet their statutory obligations under the Resource Management Act, 1991 (RMA);
- ❑ **Analysis of the effectiveness of the documents in achieving integrated management and dealing with cross boundary issues; and**
- ❑ **Recommendations on potential policy and plan changes to achieve integrated management and dealing with cross boundary issues.**

The spatial extent/scope of analysis for the KHCE in this report is defined by the ARC's Regional Policy Statement (further discussed in Section 4.1). For the purposes of this study, the 'coastal environment' of the Kaipara Harbour is considered to include three interrelated parts, based on the definitions in the ARC's Regional Policy Statement – the Coastal Marine Area (CMA), the 'Active Coastal Zone' and a Landward Component. The extent of the coastal environment is determined by factors which test whether the coast is a significant element or part.

1.4 Project Methodology

The following provides an outline of the methodology undertaken to complete the study. The issues identified in this report were identified and collated in two key ways:

- ❑ Desk top analysis of policy direction of the relevant planning documents, and
- ❑ Meetings with key representatives from Regional and Local Authorities.

Once the initial review of planning documents was undertaken, members of the study team conducted interviews with appropriate officers from each of the local authorities to discuss their initial findings to verify their accuracy. This process was useful in gauging how effective the officers perceive the relevant provisions to be in achieving their anticipated environmental outcomes. The structure of the interview questions is provided in Appendix 1. It is noted that no specific review was taken of consents granted, and the conditions of consents. The effectiveness of policy analysis has relied on the officer interviews.

1.5 Report Structure

The remainder of the report is set out as follows:

- ❑ Statutory Framework – provides an overview of the statutory context for the management of the coastal environment of the Kaipara Harbour.
- ❑ Key Findings – contains the key findings of the statutory review, provides a comparison of approaches and outlines inconsistencies between documents and evaluates their effectiveness in achieving integrated management. Opportunities are identified in terms of the regional and district council practice in managing the coastal environment of the Harbour as demonstrated by the content of the various planning documents.
- ❑ Key recommendations and prioritisation of options.

2 Overview - Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment

2.1 Existing Environment

The Kaipara Harbour ('the Harbour') has an area of 95,000 ha with 612 km of shore length. The harbour is shallow and is the largest enclosed harbour in New Zealand, with a harbour mouth of 7 kilometres across. The Harbour is located on the west coast of the northern part of the North Island. Ecologically, the Harbour is very important and contains extensive mangrove, eelgrass beds and salt marshes.¹

The catchments of the harbour are large, and encompass almost half of the Northland region for the northern portion. The harbour catchment has been highly modified with exotic forests to the south, and intensive dairying and semi-intensive grazing and horticulture elsewhere in the catchment.

There are major settlements around the harbour at Dargaville in the north, Wellsford to the east and Helensville to the south. Residential subdivision and development is occurring in more rural areas along South Head and on the Pahi Peninsula.

2.2 Natural Values

The natural values of the Kaipara Harbour have been recognised by the Auckland and Northland Conservancies of the Department of Conservation (DoC) in their Conservation Management Strategies. These documents identify the Harbour as a Site of Significant Wildlife Interest (SSWI) with a ranking of 'outstanding wildlife habitat value'. This ranking is related to the Harbour's significance as a habitat for international and national migratory and resident bird species.¹

In terms of its significance for coastal management, the Harbour has been identified as an Area of Significant Conservation Value (ASCV) in both the ARC and NRC regional coastal plans, due to the outstanding wildlife habitat values identified.²

¹ 'Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment Scoping Report', Auckland Regional Council (2007)

² The ASCV were identified by the Auckland and the Northland Conservancies for inclusion in Regional Coastal Plans using the criteria set out in the draft NZCPS 1992. A classification of national or international significance was a prerequisite for inclusion of a wetland, estuary, or coastal lagoon as an ASCV.

2.3 Activities and Uses

The KHCE is a resource that is used for, and proposed to be used for, a variety of activities. For example, there are currently numerous marine farms that exist in the northern parts of the Harbour. Sand extraction occurs in the Harbour at Tapora and near Poutu Point. In addition to these activities, the Environment Court has recently recommended to the Minister of Conservation that he grant resource consent to two sand extraction applications in the south of the harbour.¹

Several significant activities that are currently proposed include:

- ❑ Application for tidal electricity generation system at the entrance.
- ❑ Wind farms are proposed in Auckland and Northland in the vicinity of the Harbour.
- ❑ An application is in preparation for a large gas-fired power station on the south eastern shores.
- ❑ Application has been lodged for sand extraction in an area immediately outside of the harbour entrance.
- ❑ The Ministry of Fisheries is progressing the development of a fisheries management plan for the Harbour.³

2.4 Key Issues facing the Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment

The issues relating to the management of the KHCE can be described in two parts:

- ❑ The number of statutory management agencies; and
- ❑ The existing environmental issues that need to be addressed.

2.4.1 Current Management of the Harbour

Management of Kaipara Harbour and the immediate coastal environment falls under the jurisdictions of the following regulatory agencies:

- ❑ Auckland Regional Council (ARC)
- ❑ Northland Regional Council (NRC)
- ❑ Rodney District Council (RDC)
- ❑ Kaipara District Council (KDC)
- ❑ Department of Conservation (DoC)
- ❑ Ministry of Fisheries (MoF).

A jurisdictional split runs through the middle of the Harbour, the northern portion being managed by NRC, KDC, and DoC's Northland Conservancy, the southern half being managed by ARC, RDC, and DoC's Auckland Conservancy (refer to Figure 2.1).

³ 'Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment Scoping Report', Auckland Regional Council (2007)

The Ministry of Fisheries has jurisdiction over the management of major fish stocks of the Harbour as part of a quota management area for the top half of the North Island.

Given the above, the management of the KHCE is challenging. Furthermore, these agencies are charged with the same responsibilities under the RMA and other legislation such as the Local Government Act (2002) and Bio security Act (1993). The ARC and NRC have the same functions under section 30 of the RMA, as does RDC and KDC in terms of section 31 of the RMA. In addition, Te Uri o Hau's rohe covers the northern part of the harbour.

The table below sets out a comparison between the Regional and District Councils of their total rates income from each of the 2007-2008 Annual Plans. The table also provides a comparison between population and total land area. Evidently, there are some significant differences between each region and each district in terms of their respective rating base and funding for the area of land they are required to manage. The NRC has approximately twice the land area of the ARC under their jurisdiction, yet the NRC's total rateable income is approximately 7% of the ARC's total for the year 2007-2008. Significant disparities in funding resources between both Regional and District Councils also present a challenge to integrated management for the KHCE.

Table 2.1

Comparisons of Rates Funding from Annual Plans 2007 - 2008

Council	Population (2006 Census)	Land Area (km ²)	Total Rates Income (million \$)
ARC	1,303,068	16,315 km ²	\$135.9 M
NRC	148,470	30,110 km ²	\$9.7 M
RDC	89,559	2,426 km ²	\$88.3 M
KDC	18,132	3,117 km ²	\$14.5 M

The boundary of the coastal marine area (CMA) is the boundary between a number of jurisdictions both functional and spatial. That is, the land/water boundary at the mean high water spring tide mark (MHWS) and the jurisdictional boundaries between regional councils and local authorities. Integration across this boundary is therefore very important in achieving sustainable management for the Kaipara Harbour. The project's spatial scope therefore covers the immediate "coastal environment" to ensure that issues across the CMA boundary are included.

In summary, in order to achieve integrated management through multi-agency involvement and ensure appropriate environmental outcomes for the KHCE, the statutory policy statements and plans need to be considered with each other.

Figure 2.1

Kaipara Harbour Location Map showing Local Authority and Regional Authority Boundaries



2.5 Environmental Issues

The Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment is currently under development pressure and it is expected that this will increase over time. Development on land and potential development in the coastal marine area (CMA) from landward subdivision, use and development (from roads, structures, earthworks, vegetation clearance) and activities in the CMA (such as sand extraction, aquaculture) pose a range of potential adverse environmental effects on the KHCE, including: ⁴

- ❑ Reduction in water quality due to:
 - ❑ Increased amounts of sediment entering the CMA due to earthworks, vegetation clearance;
 - ❑ Increased discharges of stormwater and wastewater; and
 - ❑ Unrestricted stock access to the coastal margins.
- ❑ Loss or reduction of:
 - ❑ Natural character;
 - ❑ Landscape values;
 - ❑ Significant indigenous vegetation and fauna;
 - ❑ Ecological habitats and biodiversity;
 - ❑ Public access to and along the CMA;
 - ❑ The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions;
 - ❑ Historic/Cultural heritage; and
 - ❑ Amenity values (visual).

Due to the increases in Auckland's population there is currently a great deal of public concern over the immediate and potential negative impacts (including their cumulative effects) associated with the Kaipara Harbour.⁵ This concern stems from the expansion of coastal development in rural areas as rural subdivision rates have increased in the Kaipara catchment.

There are few baseline studies available on harbour ecology, sedimentation rates, harbour hydrodynamic processes which make it difficult to monitor change in the coastal environment, or assess the impacts of land development on the Harbour's natural and physical resources.⁶

⁴ 'Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment Scoping Report', Auckland Regional Council (2007)

⁵ 'Review of Environmental Information on Kaipara Harbour coastal environment' (draft) ASR (July 2007)

⁶ *ibid*

2.6 Environmental Monitoring

The following section provides information on the different types of monitoring that is currently carried out in the Kaipara Harbour. Section 35 of the RMA places an obligation on local authorities to monitor the state of the environment in order to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of its policies, rules, or other methods in its policy statement or its plans.

The various types of monitoring include:

- ❑ Baseline Monitoring – the repeated measurement of environmental parameters at the same location to provide baseline information against which long term changes and trends may be detected.
- ❑ Impact Monitoring – to provide information on the environmental impacts of major uses of natural resources.
- ❑ Compliance Monitoring – to determine compliance with resource consent conditions and provide an indication as to whether anticipated environmental outcomes are being achieved.
- ❑ Performance Measurement – to provide information on the effectiveness of the Councils policies, Plans and operations, and should be related to environmental outcomes.

Currently, the ARC undertakes monthly water quality monitoring for the Kaipara Harbour (at Shelly Beach) as part of its regional water quality monitoring programme. For the northern portions of the Harbour, water quality monitoring is undertaken by NRC and this includes assessing recreational bathing water quality, recreational shellfish gathering water quality, and river/estuarine water quality at numerous discharge points. Additional water quality monitoring is undertaken in combination with the development of a State of the Environment Monitoring programme. The surface waters of the two northern arms of the Kaipara Harbour (Arapaoa and Otamatea) were sampled in 1999/2000. The purpose of this sampling was to provide baseline information on the quality of these waters in comparison to other harbours and estuaries in Northland⁷.

In terms of monitoring by the two district councils, KDC and RDC undertake compliance monitoring for conditions of consent (e.g. to ensure that landscape planting is undertaken, to ensure that sediment control measures as per conditions are in place). However, no impact monitoring is undertaken in order to assess whether the conditions that are in place are sufficient in terms of achieving the environmental outcomes.

⁷ *ibid*

3 Statutory Framework – Coastal Management

3.1 Resource Management Act

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) provides the legislative framework for coastal management in New Zealand. The RMA also requires that all regional councils are to prepare and implement regional policy statements and regional coastal plans. Regional councils are also able to prepare and implement other regional plans. District councils must prepare and implement their district plans.

The following section provides a broad overview of the purpose and content of these documents as background to this study. As there are several agencies carrying out functions under the RMA there are issues with functional boundaries and with jurisdictional boundaries, as discussed earlier in the report. These boundaries make integrated management more difficult and the RMA places an obligation on the relevant organisations to efficiently and effectively deal with them.

3.2 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

The RMA requires that there will, at all times, be at least one New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) and that the Minister of Conservation is responsible for preparing that statement(s). The purpose of the NZCPS, gazetted in May 1994, is to provide a policy framework that will promote the sustainable management of the natural and physical resources of the coastal environment (section 5 & 6 of the RMA).

The NZCPS outlines the general principles for the sustainable management of New Zealand's Coastal Environment and identifies matters to be included in regional coastal plans.

3.3 Regional Policy Statements

The purpose of regional policy statements is to achieve the purpose of the RMA by providing an overview of the significant resource management issues of a region and identifying policies and methods to achieve integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the whole region. The Regional Policy Statement must not be inconsistent with any national policy statement, including the NZCPS or water conservation order.

3.4 Regional Coastal Plans

Regional councils have, in conjunction with the Minister of Conservation, functions for the control of various activities in the Coastal Marine Area (CMA).

The CMA is defined by the RMA as

“The foreshore, seabed and coastal water, and the air space above the water
–

- a. Of which the seaward boundary is the outer limits of the territorial sea:*
- b. Of which the landward boundary is the line of the mean high water springs, except where that line crosses a river, the landward boundary at that point shall be whichever is the lesser of –*
 - i. One kilometre upstream from the mouth of the river; or*
 - ii. The point upstream that is calculated by multiplying the width of the river mouth by 5”.*

The CMA is essentially the area of foreshore, seabed, coastal water and the air space above the water with a landward boundary of MHWS mark and a seaward boundary of the 12 nautical mile limit of the territorial sea.

The purpose of regional coastal plans is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in relation to the CMA. It is mandatory under section 64(1) RMA for regional councils to prepare a regional coastal plan for their region’s coastal marine area.

Section 64(2) of the RMA permits the incorporation of a regional coastal plan within a more extensive regional plan where it is considered appropriate in order to promote the integrated management of the CMA and any related part of the coastal environment. Such plans include the CMA as their seaward component but span across the landward boundary to any related part of the coastal environment. The coastal environment is not defined in the RMA, however case law has defined it as *“an environment in which the coast is a significant element or part.”*⁸ These broader regional plans are typically referred to as Regional Coastal Environment Plans. Examples in New Zealand include the Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal, the Hawke’s Bay Regional Coastal Plan, and the Taranaki Regional Coastal Plan.

3.5 Other Regional Plans

Regional plans are prepared by regional councils and concentrate on particular resources such as air, land and fresh water. The purpose of regional plans is to assist

⁸ *Northland Regional Planning Authority vs. Whangarei County Council 463/76; and The Physical Environment Association of the Coromandel vs. Thames Coromandel District Council (1982).*

a regional council to carry out its function and may focus on specific resources, activities, geographic areas or issues. The preparation of 'other' regional plans is optional. Basic regional council functions include managing factors such as soil conservation, water quality and quantity, ecosystems, natural hazards, air quality, civil defence, transport, harbour and coastal areas.

A regional plan must give effect to national policy statements, NZCPS, and any regional policy statement. Regional plans must not be inconsistent with any water conservation order, or any other regional plan for that region, or a determination, or reservation of the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Fisheries made under section 186E of the Fisheries Act 1996.

3.6 District Plans

As for regional plans, the purpose of district plans is to assist territorial authorities to carry out their functions in order to achieve the purpose of the RMA. The content of district plans is defined by section 75 of the RMA.⁹

District plans deal with the management issues relevant to that particular district. The RMA requires that district and city councils focus particularly on land use. District plans reflect this requirement, and are more land focussed than regional plans, concentrating on items such as land use effects, the effects of the activities on the surface of rivers and lakes, natural hazards, hazardous substances, and noise.

A district plan must not be inconsistent with the regional policy statement or a regional plan, along with giving effect to any national policy statement. Section 76 states that a district plan may include rules.

3.7 Local Government Act 2002

3.7.1 LTCCPS

Under the Local Government Act 2002, both Regional and District Councils are required to develop a Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCPs). The LTCCPs set out the policy projects and activities for the next ten years for each of the Councils. Projects and activities considered to relevant to management of the KHCE are set out in the table in Appendix 2.

9 1. A district plan must state:

(a) the objectives for the district; and

(b) the policies to implement the objectives; and

(c) the rules (if any) to implement the policies.

3.7.2 Annual Plans

Both Regional and District Councils are required to prepare Annual Plans which set out the plans for the next 12 months. The allocation of rates spending is based on the activities and project outlined in the LTCCPs.

3.8 Policy Documents affecting management of the KHCE

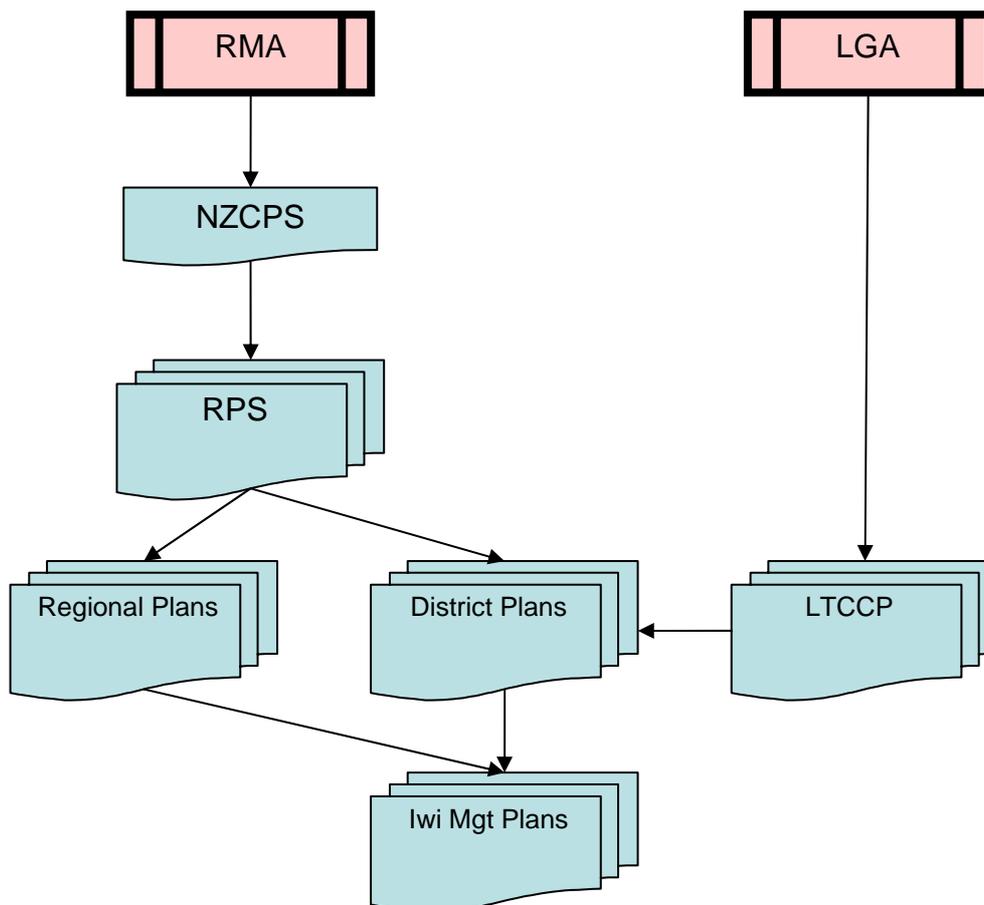
3.8.1 Statutory RMA Documents

In addition to the higher order policy documents of the NZCPS and the RPS that govern the regulatory framework, these are given effect to via the following regional and district plans by way of policies, methods and rules.

- Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal
- Auckland Regional Plan: Sediment Control
- Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water
- Northland Regional Coastal Plan
- Northland Regional Water and Soil Plan
- Kaipara District Plan
- Rodney District Plan.

Figure 3.1 below illustrates the statutory framework governing coastal management in New Zealand. This includes iwi management plans, as Regional Councils and District Councils shall have regard to any relevant planning document recognised by an iwi authority affected by a regional or district plan.

Figure 3.1
Statutory Framework for Coastal Management



3.8.2 Other Management Mechanisms

There are a number of other mechanisms that regulate the coastal environment of the Kaipara Harbour, these are summarised in Table 3.2. Some of these mechanisms have different purposes and principles to the RMA, which potentially makes integration more between the RMA and these mechanisms more challenging.

Table 3.2

Other Management Mechanisms

Act	Administration	Purpose/Jurisdiction
Fisheries Act 1996	Ministry of Fisheries (MoF)	To manage sustainability of fisheries through allocation of quota and manage the activity of fishing.
Reserves Act 1977	Department of Conservation (DoC) (and local authorities)	Acquisition, control, management, maintenance, preservation, development and use of public reserves, and to make provision for public access to the coastline and countryside.
Conservation Act 1987	DoC (and Fish & Game NZ)	To promote the conservation of New Zealand's natural and historic resources. Conservation management strategies for Northland and Auckland Conservancies.
Wildlife Act 1953	DoC (and Fish & Game NZ)	The protection and management of wildlife, native bird species, management of game.
Biosecurity Act 1993	Biosecurity NZ, DoC, MoF, Ministry of Health, regional councils, local authorities.	Preventing the introduction of unwanted organisms not yet established in NZ. Management of unwanted organisms and pests already established.
Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004	Local authorities, Minister of Conservation	To vest the foreshore and seabed in the Crown, to provide for recognition and protection of customary rights, and to provide for general rights of public access and navigation.

4 Policy Review - Regional Policy Documents

4.1 Operative Auckland Regional Policy Statement (1999)

4.1.1 ARPS Content and Scope

The Auckland Regional Policy Statement (ARPS) is a statement about managing the use, development and protection of the natural and physical resources of the region. The ARPS was made fully operative on 31 August 1999, and a review will commence no later than 10 years after that date.

There are several current plan changes for the ARPS, those relevant to this study include:

- ❑ Proposed Change 6 - Giving Effect to the Regional Growth Strategy and Integrating Landuse and Transport, and Proposed Change 7 – Metropolitan Urban Limits. Both Proposed Changes were notified on 31 March 2005 as a requirement of the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act 2004 (LGAAA). The LGAA directs all Councils in the Auckland Region to integrate their land transport and land use provisions to ensure these are consistent with the Auckland Regional Growth Strategy and give effect to the Growth Concept. The Decision Reports regarding Proposed Change 6 and Proposed Change 7 were released on 31 July 2007.
- ❑ Proposed Change 8 - Landscape and Volcanic Cones which amends the existing landscape and volcanic cone view-shaft provisions of Chapter 6: Heritage.
- ❑ Proposed Change 10 which amends the Natural Hazards section to provide clarity surrounding roles and responsibilities with respect to natural hazards management.

Submissions to Proposed Change 8 and 10 closed on 31 October 2005, and a further submission period closed on 28 July 2007.

The ARPS provides guidance on the areas and features which contribute to the coastal environment to assist in determining the extent of the coastal environment in the Auckland Region. Policy 7.4.1 sets out the areas and features that shall be taken into consideration.

The 'coastal environment' is defined as:

"an environment in which the coast is a significant element or part."

For the purposes of the Regional Policy Statement it is defined as including three distinct, but interrelated parts:

- ❑ coastal marine area (defined);
- ❑ active coastal zone (defined);

□ landward component (not defined).

The criteria for determining the landward boundary of the coastal environment are contained in Policy 7.4.1 of the ARPS. Policy 7.4.1 states:

“In determining the extent of the coastal environment of the Auckland Region, the following areas and features shall be taken into consideration:

- i. any vegetation or habitat adjacent to, or connected with, the coastal marine area (CMA) which derives its intrinsic character from a coastal location or which contributes to the natural character of the coastal environment;*
- ii. any landform adjacent to the coastal marine area which is presently being formed or modified by processes of coastal erosion or deposition;*
- iii. any feature or collection of features, either natural or physical, that derives its intrinsic character from a coastal location and which substantially contributes to the visual quality or amenity value of the coast;*
- iv. any site, building, place or area of cultural heritage value adjacent to, or connected with, the coastal marine area which derives its heritage value from a coastal location;*
- v. areas of Significant Natural Heritage listed in Appendix B and Outstanding and Regionally Significant Landscape Areas shown on Map series 2 which are adjacent to the coastal marine area;*
- vi. any land adjacent to the coast from which surface drainage may flow directly to the coastal marine area;*
- vii. any land adjacent to the coast which is affected by, or could be affected by, coastal flooding and other identified coastal hazards;*
- viii. any land adjacent to the coast where activities may take place which have a direct physical connection with, or impact on, the coastal marine area;*
- ix. the coastal marine area.”*

The following table describes and provides a summary of the key policy approaches and anticipated environmental outcomes (and/or objectives where environmental outcomes are not explicitly outlined) for the ARPS that are considered relevant to the management of the KHCE.

4.1.2 Description of ARPS Policy Approach

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.	A mix of regulatory and non-regulatory methods is proposed. Subdivision, use development shall be encouraged to locate in areas where natural character has been compromised. Policy for local authorities to include provisions in their plans which recognise the coastal environment in a manner consistent with Policy 7.4.1 Coastal Environment, and gives direction to local authorities to define the coastal environment.
To maintain and enhance public access to and along the CMA and to publicly owned land in the coastal environment.	Policy seeks to ensure provision is made for esplanade reserves, and esplanade strips, and encourages the establishment of continuous linkages. ARPS relies on the Regional Plan Coastal and District Plans to identify circumstances and/or areas where public access is to be restricted and that provisions will be put into District Plan for setting aside esplanade reserves, esplanade strips, access strips.
To maintain water quality in coastal waters and enhance where it is degraded in estuaries, harbours, coastal waters, wetlands.	A regulatory and non-regulatory approach that requires discharges to be avoided and where not feasible, effects of discharge to be mitigated. Policies are for minimum standards/measures of environmental quality for protecting significant water bodies and coastal waters, including Kaipara Harbour. There is specific reference to Kaipara Harbour water quality being of high priority to Ngati Whatua and Te Kawerau a Maki.
To protect outstanding natural features and landscapes, areas of significant indigenous vegetation, and significant historic and cultural places and areas in the coastal environment.	Regulatory and non-regulatory approach taken, and Regional and District Plans to include provisions to give effect to the policies in the ARPS. Outstanding and Regionally Significant landscapes are to be protected and preserved, including Sub-Tidal Areas of Special Value in the CMA. Where areas of Special Value extend above/below MHWS local authorities to adopt consistent/integrated management approaches to protect these values and natural processes. For the protection of significant indigenous vegetation, policy is to give effect to use of discretionary controls in District and Regional Plans (e.g. bush lot subdivision).
To recognise and provide for the relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga of the coastal environment.	Objectives and policies relating to protection of water quality of significance to tangata whenua (see water quality above).

4.2 Operative Northland Regional Policy Statement (2002)

4.2.1 NRPS Content and Scope

The Northland Regional Policy Statement (NRPS) was made fully operative in July 2002. Prior to this, the plan was operative for all but the Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Landscapes Section. The timeline for review of the NRPS is every five years.

The NRC has completed an efficiency and effectiveness report for the NRPS. From this review, changes will be initiated to address the areas that have been identified as high priority for improvement. A steering group has been established to guide the identification and prioritisation of high priority topics for change within the NRPS. It is expected that the consultation period for these changes will be later this year (2007).

Whilst the NRPS does not specifically refer to the KHCE through its objectives, policies and methods of implementation, there is recognition in the policy statement of the importance of integrated management specifically for the Kaipara Harbour. The NRPS identifies this as a significant issue for the region, particularly involving the integrated management of:

- the coastal marine area of the Northland and Auckland regions
- the boundary between which runs through the Kaipara Harbour, and
- the effect which cross the coastal marine area administrative boundaries.

The following table describes and provides a summary of the key policy and anticipated environmental outcomes for the NRPS that are considered relevant to the management of the KHCE.

4.2.2 Description of NRPS Policy Approach

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment.	Like the ARPS, the policy approach for the preservation of natural character is a mix of regulatory and non-regulatory methods. Policies are general and the approach is primarily aimed at controlling development activities through the RCP and District Plans.
The maintenance and enhancement of public use, enjoyment and access to the coastal environment.	Regulatory and non-regulatory policy approach through the creation of reserves, esplanade areas and public access strips. Restrictions are placed on public access where necessary for environmental or public health and safety reasons.
The maintenance and enhancement of water quality of coastal waters.	The policy approach for water quality is primarily a regulatory approach of setting water quality standards for receiving waters and appropriate provisions to match this within the regional and district plans. The Kaipara Harbour is identified in the NRPS as a 'high priority' harbour for work to be undertaken to set specific water quality standards.
To protect and avoid adverse effects on significant landscape values including seascapes and significant landforms which impart a distinctly coastal character.	Policies and objectives, and non-regulatory approaches for landscape values, including provisions for managing effects on Outstanding Natural Features and Outstanding Landscapes. Overall, the policy approach is to identify outstanding landscapes and building on the existing assessment work. Does not include specific provisions for coastal landscapes, cultural landscapes and historic heritage and historic landscapes within the coastal environment.
To protect areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.	Policy approach relies on policies to be given effect to in District Plans (e.g. to enable locally significant natural features to be required as reserves or protected in covenant at time of subdivision, to require fencing and restorative planting of degraded natural features as conditions of consent where appropriate).
The minimisation of conflicts between uses in the CMA.	For the allocation of space in the CMA, the policy approach is to manage activities through the Regional Coastal Plan. Overarching policy to limit occupation of space (structures and facilities) in areas of high cultural, ecological, landscape, recreational value.
To promote the control of the introduction of exotic organisms into the CMA.	The NRPS identifies the invasion of introduced plants e.g. spartina, into harbours as an issue. The policy approach promotes the inclusion of provisions in the Regional Coastal Plan relating to the control of the introduction of exotic organisms into the CMA.
To recognize the cultural significance of the coast to tangata whenua and their traditional use of resources, and to prevent damage to and loss of traditional fisheries habitat and tangata whenua resources.	A non-regulatory approach is taken. The protection of traditional fisheries is pursued through management planning activities with iwi. Encourages promotion of formal protection of areas and sites traditionally used.

4.3 Operative Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal (2004)

4.3.1 ARPC Content and Scope

The Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal (ARPC) was first notified in February 1995, and a Proposed Plan was publicly released in September 1999. On 5 August, 2004 the plan was granted approval and made operative for those parts that relate to the coastal environment and were not subject to variations.

There are five outstanding Variations to the Proposed Plan relevant to the KCHE. The plan changes and variations currently proposed for the ARPC include the following:

- ❑ Proposed Plan Change 1 – Coastal Mooring Management Areas – Rakino Island (Waiting on Ministerial Approval).
- ❑ Proposed Plan Change 2 – Coastal Occupation charging notified 4th July, 2007, submission period closes 15th August 2007.
- ❑ Proposed Plan Change 3 – Wynyard Quarter, notified 9th July 2007 and submissions closed 20 August 2007.
- ❑ Proposed Plan Change 4 – Mangroves, under preparation.
- ❑ Variation 1 – Stormwater and Wastewater discharges (included in Chapters 10, 20 and 32 of the Coastal Plan.
- ❑ Variations 2 - 6 (Aquaculture), notified by the ARC to the Proposed Plan in October 2002. In mid 2006 the ARC withdrew Variation 3 to the proposed Aquaculture provisions that related to the Aquaculture Management Areas within the South Kaipara Harbour.¹⁰

The ARPC is a 'coastal environment' plan - i.e. the ARPC is a regional plan which incorporates the Auckland Regional Coastal Plan (i.e. those parts of this document which relate to the coastal marine area) and which also covers related parts of the coastal environment. The ARPC also includes definition for 'Inner Coastal Water', which is defined as all that coastal water which is NOT open coastal water. Specifically, for Kaipara Harbour this is defined as that area of the foreshore and seabed which is bounded by the Auckland Regional Boundary.

The following table describes and provides a summary of the key policy approaches and anticipated environmental outcomes for the ARPC that are considered relevant to the management of the KHCE.

10 At the time this variation was removed due to the following reasons - the need to carry out further investigatory work and consultation, recognition that the Environment Court had recently declined consent for a proposed mussel farm within one of the Proposed AMAs, and the ARC had recommended refusal for another Marine Farm proposed within a different AMAs.

4.3.2 Description of ARPC Policy Outcomes

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
<p>To preserve natural character of the coastal environment by protecting the CMA from inappropriate subdivision, use, development AND encourage appropriate subdivision, use, development above MHWS to locate in appropriate areas in the coastal environment.</p>	<p>Objectives and policies for preserving natural character of the coastal environment. Regulatory and non-regulatory approaches are outlined and rules relating to natural character are contained in the Use and Development section. Non-regulatory approaches rely on District Plans and other documents e.g. reserve management plans, conservation management strategies, coastal management strategies to include provisions to protection those qualities, elements, features located above MHWS where they contribute to natural character, particularly areas adjoining CPAs, or Outstanding or Regionally Significant Landscapes.</p>
<p>To maintain and enhance public access and to provide for the restriction to protect ecological, cultural values, or health and safety.</p>	<p>Objectives, policies and rules relating to public access to and along the CMA. In CPA 1 and 2 provision of public access is Restricted Discretionary (although status does vary depending on nature of activity).</p>
<p>To maintain and enhance water and sediment quality to an acceptable level.</p>	<p>A comprehensive approach to discharge of sewage, stormwater, other contaminants, with a wide range of objectives and policies to ensure water and sediment in the CMA is maintained or enhanced. Rules permit some discharges to occur as of right, subject to certain conditions, and where effects of discharges are unacceptable they are prohibited. Environmental Response Criteria have been developed, with specific standards for CPA1 and 2 areas of the Kaipara Harbour. Additional criteria for contact recreation have been set and criteria have also been developed for aquatic ecosystems.</p>
<p>To protect dynamic functioning of coastal processes and to preserve ecological and physical values and processes in Coastal Protection Areas.</p>	<p>Objectives, policies and rules relating to preservation and protection of natural features and ecosystems in the CMA are contained in the Use and Development section. Policies identify those natural and physical values/processes which contribute to the overall quality of the coastal environment and establish performance standards to be met by any subdivision, use and development. Rules give a higher level of protection to certain areas in the CMA in recognition of international, national, regional significance and vulnerability. District Plans are to contain appropriate provision to ensure protection of values of the CPAs.</p>
<p>Natural features, areas of significant indigenous vegetation and coastal habitats shall be protected and preserved.</p>	<p>A regulatory and non-regulatory approach is taken, as outlined for coastal processes/ecosystems above. The Plan facilitates protection of significant habitats of indigenous fauna and vegetation by the identification for information purposes those areas above MHWS which have important functional links to the CPAs in the CMA. District Plans should contain appropriate provision to ensure protection of values of the CPAs. Non-regulatory mechanisms include restrictions (through bylaws) on public access to and recreational use of those parts of the CPAs used as bird nesting areas during breeding season.</p>

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
To protect Outstanding Landscapes of the coastal environment and maintenance of the key elements, features and patterns of Regionally Significant Landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development	Policy approach establishes a hierarchy of protection of landscapes and seascapes in the CMA. Outstanding Landscapes have the highest landscape quality and sensitive to adverse effects. TA's are to ensure appropriate provisions in District Plans to give protection to Outstanding and Regionally Significant Landscapes above MHWS are consistent with that given to those landscapes and seascape in the CMA.
To recognise the CMA has characteristics of special spiritual, historical and cultural significance to Tangata Whenua.	Regulatory and non regulatory approach. Policies provide for identifying, evaluating, protecting in the Plan, these characteristics (including waahi tapu, tauranga waka, mahinga mataitai, taonga raranga). Rules relating to coastal matters of significance to tangata whenua are contained in Use and Development section.
To protect and preserve significant maritime cultural heritage sites, buildings, places, areas in the coastal environment.	Policy provides appropriate recognition and protection of these sites located below MHWS. Objectives and policies establish hierarchy of protection for sites, buildings, places, areas which have significant cultural heritage value in the CMA. Rules relating to cultural heritage contained in Use and Development section.
To ensure efficient use is made of the CMA and to maintain where appropriate the open space nature of the coastal environment.	General objectives and policies to protect from inappropriate subdivision, use and development in the CMA. Recognition that cumulative effects of large users and inappropriate development can place pressure on natural and physical resources and detract from amenity values. Plan provides for appropriate subdivision, use and development in the CMA and does this by expressing objectives, policies, rules specific to activities listed in the Use and Development section.
To provide for appropriate extraction of sand, shingle and other natural material, while avoiding, remedying, mitigating adverse effects.	Policies identify effects of extraction to be addressed and areas where it should be avoided. Non-regulatory methods require ARC to monitor beach profiles to identify long term trends in beach dynamics, to continue to monitor long term impacts of existing operations and when applications for extraction cross regional boundaries ARC will seek to ensure a consistent approach is adopted by consent authorities involved.
To avoid adverse effects from introduction of exotic species that have been introduced.	Regulatory and non-regulatory approach with policies for planting, transplanting, introduction of any plant in the CMA to be avoided where it will result in more than minor modification in CPA1, or modify scheduled item for preservation in Cultural Heritage Schedule 1. Under existing rules, the introduction or planting of Spartina in the CMA is prohibited, and the introduction of any exotic species in CPA1 or 2 is prohibited.
To achieve the development of appropriate aquaculture activities.	Broad policies and objectives for the establishment of aquaculture activities in locations that do not adversely affect natural and physical resources of CMA, and ensure preservation of natural character. Rules based approach. ARC to liaise with NRC, and TA's to facilitate integrated management of aquaculture activities, particularly in terms of access, land based facilities and waste disposal.

4.4 Operative Northland Regional Plan: Coastal (2004)

4.4.1 NRPC Content and Scope

The purpose of this Regional Coastal Plan (NRPC) is to assist the NRC to promote the sustainable management of the natural and physical resources in relation to the coastal marine area. The NRPC was publicly notified in December 1994 and was made fully operative in July 2004.

There are currently four Plan Changes to the Regional Coastal Plan that are being processed.

1. Moorings and marina review
2. Whangarei Harbour
3. Mangroves Management
4. Proposed Plan Change - Policy and Regulatory Regime for Aquaculture Management Areas.

A full review of the plan is to be undertaken every 10 years, from the date of the plan becoming operative.

This plan covers the region's "coastal marine area", including the area around Northland's coast from MHWs to the 12 nautical mile (22.3 kilometre) limit of New Zealand's territorial sea including the air space above this area.

The following table describes and provides a summary of the key policy approaches and anticipated environmental outcomes for the NRPC that are considered relevant to the management of the KHCE.

4.4.2 Description of NRPC Policy Outcomes

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
Preserve natural character of the CMA and protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.	Policy recognises that natural character of a specific coastal area is generally comprised of elements both on land and within the CMA, and recognises the need for integrated management of the CMA with coastal land management. Principal methods of implementation are through rules and assessment criteria to allow site-specific control of subdivision, uses and developments which may adversely affect natural character. Subdivision, use and development are consolidated, rather than expanding into new areas where adverse effects are uncertain or unknown. Development is provided for in Marine Management Areas 3, 4, 5 and 6, whereas the management areas that apply to Kaipara Harbour are focused on conservation and protection through MMA 1, and 2. Non-regulatory approaches promote the

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
	use of joint hearings to achieve more integrated management.
Maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along CMA (except where restriction on access is necessary).	A mix of regulatory and non-regulatory methods. Rules and assessment criteria allows site-specific provision for, or control of, public access to and along the coastal marine area. For example, marine farms are controlled in certain zones, trimming of mangroves for public access controlled in certain zones.
To manage discharges to the CMA from land and freshwater catchments outside the coastal environment.	The policy approach is to classify the waters within Northland's CMA as a means of clearly identifying the water quality management aims for individual areas of coastal water. To identify any parts of the CMA which are or have the potential to be, significantly degraded by use and development and gives priority to areas of high use by the general public. There are general water quality standards/guidelines for managing waters classified in the plan, standards are non-specific for Kaipara Harbour. The northern Harbour is identified as one of 6 high priority harbours for investigation to identify the quality of water and to classify it. NRC is to prepare and implement monitoring programmes to gather sufficient information over the next 10 years to be able to accurately describe existing water quality of Northland's CMA and to classify it.
To identify and protect from inappropriate subdivision, use and development of outstanding natural features and landscapes which are wholly or partially within Northland's coastal marine area.	Policies and objectives to recognise and provide for the protection of landforms and/or geological features of international, national or regional importance which are wholly or partially within Northland's CMA. North Head – Kaipara Harbour entrance is identified in the Plan as an outstanding landform, and Appendix 3 recognises geologic features that are relevant to the Kaipara Harbour. Effective protection of landscape and natural features requires that these be recognized and provided for in district plans and conservation management strategies.
The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation within Northland's coastal marine area from the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development.	Policy and objectives to identify areas of significant indigenous vegetation, including mangroves, within Northland's coastal marine area and protect these from the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development. Includes policy to provide for the removal or pruning of individual mangrove trees where these obstruct existing public access to the CMA, interfere with existing structures and obstruct land drainage channels. Mangroves to be sustainably managed where the expansion of mangroves encroaches the coastal environment (Plan Change 3). The use of rules and assessment criteria to allow site specific control of adverse effects of subdivision, use and development on areas of significant indigenous. Also use of rules to avoid adverse effects, threats, posed by stock to significant indigenous vegetation. Rules relate to minor and major clearance and alteration of vegetation and habitat for MMA1 (prohibited).
The minimisation of conflicts between uses in the CMA.	Allocation of coastal space between competing uses and users is dealt with through a zoning approach. The basis of zoning is through effects, values and

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
	activities (use and development); certain activities are prohibited in certain zones. For example, marine farms in certain locations.
The recognition and protection of sites, buildings and other structures, places or areas of cultural heritage value within Northland's CMA, and that exist adjacent to the CMA and may be adversely affected by use and development in the CMA.	Regulatory and non-regulatory approach to address the potential for activities within the CMA to adversely affect heritage values of sites, buildings, places or areas of adjoining land. Use of rules and assessment criteria allows site-specific control of uses and developments which may adversely affect sites of cultural heritage value.
The management of the natural and physical resources within Northland's CMA in a manner that recognises and respects the traditional and cultural relationships of tangata whenua with the coast.	A non-statutory approach is taken through policies and objectives that promote such methods as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="746 741 1329 808">❑ providing resources and information to assist Maori to develop Resource Management Plans; and <li data-bbox="746 835 1329 936">❑ providing resources and information to enable iwi to apply for and manage Taiapure and Maataitai Reserves.
The development of sustainable aquaculture activities is enabled, and AMAs to be located in appropriate areas of the CMA where adverse effects on natural, social, cultural values and other uses are avoided.	Rules based approach whereby marine farms are authorized by coastal permits, and NRC to undertake enforcement role. Proposed Plan Change 4 defines areas to be managed principally for aquaculture activities purposes as Marine 4 (Aquaculture Management Areas). Aquaculture Evaluation Maps represent areas likely to be unsuitable for aquaculture (identified as 'Critical').

4.5 Operative Auckland Regional Plan: Sediment Control (2001)

4.5.1 ARP: Sediment Content and Scope

The statutory responsibilities of the ARC include the control of the use of land for the purpose of the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of water in water bodies and coastal water and the control of discharges of contaminants into or onto water. The Auckland Regional Plan: Sediment (ARP: Sediment) addresses the issue of sediment discharge. The plan defines the mechanisms the ARC has chosen for avoiding, mitigating or remedying any adverse effect on the environment due to sediment discharge from bare earth surfaces. The ARP: Sediment was made operative in November 2001, and a review of this plan is currently underway.

The Plan provides rules for land disturbing activities and identifies four main categories for these including: vegetation removal, earthworks, roading/trenching/tracking, and quarries. Resource consent requirements for the above activities are based upon soil types, area or length of disturbance, slope and whether the activity falls within a 'Sediment Control Protection Area'.

The 'Sediment Control Protection Area' is defined as:

“100m either side of a foredune or 100m landward of the coastal marine area (whatever is the more landward of mean high water springs) or 50m landward of the edge of a watercourse, or wetland of 1000m² or more.”

The following table describes and provides a summary of the key policy approaches and anticipated environmental outcomes for the ARPlan: Sediment that are considered relevant to the management of the KHCE.

4.5.2 Description of Policy Outcomes for ARP: Sediment

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Outcomes
To maintain and enhance the quality of water in waterbodies and coastal water.	<p>Policy and objectives that relate to land disturbing activities where these are considered inappropriate. Specifically if qualities, elements, features which contribute to natural character of the coastal environment are adversely affected. This includes significant adverse effects on significant indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna, and features identified in the ARPS and ARPC as having outstanding or regionally significant ecological, landform, geologic, and/or landscape values.</p> <p>Minimum earthwork strategies and initiatives are set out. This Plan identifies areas around waterbodies, wetlands and coastal waters in the Region as Sediment Control Protection Areas (SCPA's). Non regulatory methods are also proposed, including publicity and education programmes.</p>
To sustain the mauri of water in waterbodies and coastal waters, ancestral lands, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga.	Objectives and policies to sustain mauri of water, water bodies, coastal waters, ancestral lands, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga. Methods relate to those outlined above.

4.6 Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water (2001)

4.6.1 ARP: ALW Content and Scope

The Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water (ALW Plan) applies to the management of air, land and water resources in the region including: air, soil, rivers and streams, lakes, groundwater, wetlands and geothermal water. The ALW Plan was notified for public submissions in October 2001. Submissions closed in May 2002 and further submissions closed in December 2002.

Variation 1 was notified in June 2002 and hearings were held throughout 2003 to consider all the submissions. Decisions on submissions and further submission were notified on 8 October 2004.

The Plan contains contains objectives and policies relating to natural character and terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, together with an indication of how effects of activities on these will be assessed. In regards to use and development, objectives and policies relate to the appropriate use and development of air, land and freshwater bodies within the context of an urban region experiencing rapid growth. These objectives and policies link to the regional policy framework within which growth is managed and particular attention is given to growth both inside urban areas and in rural parts of the region.

A variety of management areas have been developed along with management approaches, and those relevance to the Harbour catchment are set out below:

- ❑ Wetland Management Areas
- ❑ Natural Lake Management Areas
- ❑ Natural Stream Management Areas
- ❑ Rural Air Quality Management Areas
- ❑ Coastal Marine Air Quality Management Area.

Whilst this Plan considers the effects of discharges onto land and into freshwater, the interlinked nature of this system with the coastal marine area is acknowledged.

4.6.2 Description of Policy Outcomes for ARP: ALW

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Outcomes
To protect, maintain or enhance the quality of land and water.	Policy to encourage land management practises that minimise discharge of sediment. Regulatory and non-regulatory approaches seek to avoid or minimise the adverse effects arising from: discharge of sediment, overflows and exfiltration from wastewater networks, contaminant levels in stormwater runoff and sewage treatment plant discharges, and discharges from contaminated land and waste from production land activities.
To maintain in-stream and riparian habitat values and water quality of lakes, category 1 rivers and streams.	Policies and regulatory approaches to discourage stock access to beds of lakes, rivers and streams. A range of tools (advocacy, partnership) considered.

4.7 Operative Northland Regional Water and Soil Plan (2004)

4.7.1 NRWSP Content and Scope

The Northland Regional Water and Soil Plan (NRWSP) identifies the significant water and soil issues for the region and seeks to address these through the policies and rules. It also proactively promotes a programme of environmental education, advocacy, information provision and advice.

The Plan covers the following activities:

- Discharges to land such as landfills, rubbish dumps and tips, sewage, stormwater, agricultural discharges, industrial and trade discharges
- Discharges to water
- The taking, using, damming or diverting of surface and groundwater
- Building and modifying structures in river and lake beds
- Introducing plants to river and lake beds
- Drainage and river control activities
- Earthworks
- Vegetation clearance
- Activities within the Riparian Management Zone along rivers, lakes, and the coastal marine area.

This Plan covers the effects of land use activities on water and soil in Northland above the line of mean high water springs.

The Plan was made operative on 28 August 2004. The Regional Council publicly notified and released “The Regional Water and Soil Plan for Northland: Proposed Plan Change 1” on Saturday 18 March 2006.

The following table describes and provides a summary of the key policy approaches and anticipated environmental outcomes for the NRWSP that are considered relevant to the management of the KHCE.

4.7.2 Description of NRWSP Policy Outcomes

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Outcomes
Protection of soil resources from degradation or loss as a result of unsustainable land practices.	Erosion prone land is identified for the Kaipara Harbour catchment. Specific rules to ensure all practicable measures shall be taken to avoid creating erosion features and to mitigate effects of existing erosion features.
Safeguarding life-supporting capacity of water and ecosystems from adverse effects of unsustainable land practices and land uses.	Outlines the cumulative adverse effects of sedimentation on estuarine and harbour environments biodiversity and coastal processes. Loss of wetland function such as nutrient and sediment trapping, buffer storage of water through land development practices such as drainage, stock grazing, watering. Policy and objectives and regulatory and non-regulatory methods for avoiding adverse effects on coastal water quality, particularly estuaries and inner harbour areas are considered. The Plan has general environmental standards including standards relating to short-term visual clarity of coastal water.
Management of natural and physical resources in a manner that recognises and provides for the traditional and cultural relationships of tangata whenua with land and water.	Rules and environmental standards for activities that interfere or destroy waahi tapu sites or cultural sites of significance.

5 Key Findings – Regional Policy Documents

5.1 General Policy Direction

In broad terms the overall policy approach and direction in the Regional Policy Statements and Plans is clear and generally consistent with a focus on the protection and preservation of the coastal environment. Policy direction was expressly discussed between both regional councils as both policy statement and plans were prepared in the early 1990s. However, the plans tend to contain fairly generic policy statements and objectives and do not have specific reference or provisions for the KHCE.

In summary, none of the plans have adopted specific objectives, policies, rules or zonings for the Kaipara Harbour. There is a general observation made by Council officers that there is a lack of specific guidance and policy direction for areas of significance such as the Kaipara Harbour. Whilst policy may be specific for addressing issues at a regional level, it is not 'locationally' specific for areas of special value. The issue being whether such general approaches in policy is sufficient to achieve the anticipated environmental and policy outcomes for the KHCE.

Common to all plans are policies that rely on the District Councils to give effect to policies and rules in their District Plans. For example, for landscape value protection, the NRC undertook the identification of landscape values in Kaipara District. The NRPS identifies that the District Councils have the responsibility to give effect to protecting these values in policies and rules in their District Plans. Consequently, there are no specific provisions relating to landscape protection in the Northland Regional Plans.

Key Issue:

- ❑ Lack of specific policy direction for areas of special value – KHCE.

Recommendation:

- ❑ Regional Councils to consider incorporating specific policies, objectives and methods for KHCE.

5.1.1 CMA vs. Coastal Environment

The ARC policy approach through both the ARPS and the ARPC promotes integrated management of the CMA and any related part of the coastal environment. Although the rules in the ARPC relate to below MHWS, the provisions through the objectives and policies of this plan enable the ARC to consider both the CMA and the landward component of the coastal environment when assessing applications for coastal permits.

Where inter-regional issues arise, the ARCP indicates joint and combined hearings as an appropriate means of addressing situations where coastal consent applications or the possible effects of use and development cross the administrative boundaries. As outlined previously, the ARCP is a 'coastal environment' plan and although it does not apply rules outside the CMA it does contain provisions that enable consideration of effects on the coastal environment.

The NRPC refers only to the CMA, restricting its consideration of effects to within the CMA. The management direction for the NRC plans for areas in the coastal environment above MHWS is addressed in policy recommendations towards those statutory agencies which have direct control over use, development and protection of resources on coastal land (i.e. the District Councils and DoC). However, the NRPC does note the importance of addressing inter-regional cross boundary issues with consistency. Particularly, managing the adverse effects of sand extraction and aquaculture activities are identified as needing an integrated approach. The NRPC also acknowledges that there is a lack of information on the effects of activities and therefore takes a precautionary approach.

For the NRC, the linkage between the coastal marine area and coastal land management is an identified area of weakness in terms of effectively and efficiently managing the coastal environment and this would apply to the KHCE.¹¹ In summary, the NRPS does not effectively define the coastal environment and is lacking specific provisions for coastal landscapes, cultural and historic heritage within the coastal environment. As the NRC plans do not have an agreed definition for the 'coastal environment' this will make consistent implementation difficult. Better definition of the 'coastal environment' would be particularly useful as the NRPS policies and methods often discuss the coastal environment rather than the coastal marine area.

Key Issue:

- ❑ Northland Regional Policy Statement and Coastal Plan do not effectively define the 'coastal environment'.

Recommendation:

- ❑ NRC to further define and provide for the 'coastal environment' through objectives and policies in these plans.

5.1.2 The Zoning Approach

The ARC and NRC plans both use a 'management area' or zoning approach as a framework for the objectives, policies and rules in the Regional Coastal Plans. The Regional Coastal Plans have adopted management areas for existing activities for ports, wharves, marinas, moorings, and identified areas of conservation significance. The remainder of the marine area is left as a 'general management' area where activities are mainly discretionary.

¹¹ 'Regional Policy Statement Efficiency & Effectiveness Report' NRC (2007)

The NRC Coastal Plan divides the northern Harbour into three management areas: Marine 1 (Protection), Marine 2 (Conservation) and Marine 3 (Marine Farms). The Northern Wairoa River arm is Marine 1; the eastern arms of the Harbour are Marine 2. Areas where conservation values are to be protected are Marine 1. In Marine 2, areas are to be managed to conserve ecological, cultural or amenity values. The northern harbour has been identified as an Area of Significant Conservation Value (ASCV) by the Minister of Conservation.

Similarly, the ARC Coastal Plan has used Conservation Protection Areas 1 (CPA1 – areas requiring preservation) and Conservation Protection Areas 2 (CPA2 – areas requiring protection) to protect the natural character elements that are provided for in Chapter 1 of the NZCPS. CPA1 and CPA2 are coastal protection areas of regional, national or international significance due to their ecological or geological value. CPA 1 have a higher degree of protection and imperative to avoid adverse effects as they are generally small discrete areas that are more vulnerable to adverse effects of activities. CPA 2s are larger areas and more robust to adverse effects than CPA1s. The ARC Plan identifies all of the southern Harbour as an Area of Significant Conservation Value (ASCV), and Coastal Protection Areas (CPAs) 1 and 2 are scattered throughout the Harbour.

Generally speaking, the management area approach is considered by Council Officers to be an efficient means of determining what activities should take place in certain locations. Both the ARC and NRC Coastal Plans are able to give some recognition to the significant ecological value of the Kaipara Harbour through this approach. However, there are several key pitfalls with the use of management areas. For instance, the provisions for CPA1s work well as many activities are prohibited in these areas and offer a higher level of protection and preservation. However, a more general management approach is taken for CPA2s as provision is made for some activities and uses. It is considered that in some CPA2s ecological and geological values may be being damaged by activities. Adverse effects of activities on the CPAs are to be mitigated through adequate consent conditions and consent applications are assessed against through a raft of assessment criteria. Therefore, given the above, a closer investigation of consent conditions being applied and the enforcement of these should be considered.

Another concern associated with the CPAs is that their spatial boundaries only cover an area of protection for 'known' values. The CPAs do not focus on the sub-tidal areas (below low tide), and where there is a paucity of information on ecological or geologic values, the CPA management area does not exist. In other the words, the CPA areas do not cover all ecologically or geologically significant areas in the Kaipara Harbour. As new information of values in Harbour arises, new areas for CPAs can be identified. However, in the context of statutory timeframes there is a risk that new areas identified for CPA status may be further damaged before they can be incorporated into the plans.

It is also recognised by Council Officers that there is difficulty in creating management areas due to the lack of knowledge and incomplete understanding of the operation of coastal processes, and their relationships between physical, biological, and chemical harbour processes. Whilst the management area approach provides a framework that

offers strategic direction, the assumption is that all values of importance are captured and will be protected or preserved. Whereas, as outlined above, there is an incomplete knowledge base or understanding of these values.

Key Issues:

- ❑ Incomplete knowledge of areas that require special protection/preservation in the KHCE under current management area approach.
- ❑ Special values considered to be damaged in CPA2s by activities that are granted consent.

Recommendation:

- ❑ Further analysis and evaluation is needed of the consent conditions applied to activities in CPAs and MMAs and the enforcement of these. Costs of this review should be recovered from Consent Holders.

5.1.3 Water Quality

Temporal monitoring is undertaken in the Harbour for general water quality (this includes bathing and shellfish water quality), consent condition monitoring and SoE monitoring.¹² In general, the ASR report finds the data assessed indicated poor water quality for many areas of the harbour. This could suggest that current regulatory and non-regulatory approaches for water quality in the plans are not sufficient to achieve the desired environmental outcomes for harbour water quality (i.e. too maintain and enhance the quality of water in waterbodies and coastal water). However, there are many processes and factors that have the potential to adversely affect water quality in water bodies and coastal water, for instance overflows from wastewater, discharge of sediment, and contaminants in stormwater. It is not considered that current monitoring is sufficient or definitive enough to distinguish between which controls are or are not working.

A difference in approach exists for management of water quality between the ARC and NRC. The ARC focuses on 'source end' whilst the NRC focus is on 'classification' of the receiving water body and ensuring that applicable water quality standards are being met.

The ARC takes a comprehensive approach to discharge of sewage, stormwater, other contaminants, with a wide range of objectives and policies to ensure water and sediment in the CMA is maintained or enhanced. Rules permit some discharges to occur as of right, subject to certain conditions, where best management practice is applied. Environmental Response Criteria have been developed and are proposed in Variation 1 of the ARC Air, Land and Water Plan, with specific standards for CPA1 and 2 areas which affect the Kaipara Harbour.

¹² 'Review of Environmental Information on Kaipara Harbour coastal environment' (draft) ASR (July 2007)

The NRC Plans adopts the water quality standards of the Third Schedule of the RMA, and has no specific standards for the Kaipara Harbour. The plan does identify the northern Kaipara Harbour as one of six priority harbours for investigation in order to identify the quality of the water and to classify it. However, undertaking a classification process for water quality for the Harbour would require a large amount of resource for the NRC. Although this work is considered a priority for the NRC, the generic plan standards for water quality will continue to be applied until such a time that this work can be undertaken. Until water quality is quantified at an individual water body level, the NRC will continue to set water quality goals on a consent-by-consent basis and sets the conditions for consent accordingly.

Key Issue:

- ❑ Difference in approach to maintain and enhance coastal water quality – ARC 'source' end vs NRC 'water body classification' approach.

Recommendation:

- ❑ Further evaluation and investigation is required into a comparison of each approach in terms of achieving desired environmental outcomes. (Will different approaches to water quality achieve similar/consistent environmental outcomes for KHCE?).

5.1.4 Sediment Control

Sedimentation is occurring around parts of the Kaipara Harbour. Sedimentation is a natural physical process characteristic of low-energy environments like the Harbour. Yet there is anecdotal evidence and a wide-held perception (both Council officers and the public) that sedimentation in the Harbour is increasing due to anthropogenic activities. This suggests that ARC and NRC sediment controls are not achieving the environmental outcomes that are sought. To date, attempts to assess the scale of influence of activities has been inhibited by a general lack of environmental information and monitoring. Therefore it is very difficult to correlate the effectiveness of policy and methods of implementation with specific areas of sedimentation in the Harbour. Future studies of the effects and rates of sedimentation in the KHCE should broaden their focus from the coastal environment to include the Harbour catchment in order to gain a better understanding of all inputs of sediment that enter the KHCE.

There are some key comparisons in approach between the ARC and NRC sediment controls. Specific consistencies and differences for earthworks, farming and forestry are set out below.

5.1.4.1 Earthworks

The ARP: Sediment has a more urban focus based on the management of sedimentation that is generated for large earthworks activity. This plan sets out rules for land disturbing activities and land practices resulting in accelerated erosion. The plan acknowledges specific coastal areas in the rules through the definition of a

Sediment Control Protection Area (SCPA). Rules that pertain to land disturbing activities differ depending on whether the effected area falls with the SCPA or outside of it. A best management practice approach is taken for stormwater and sediment control, the assumption is that this works effectively. However, the best management practice applied is only as good as the current knowledge and technology it is based upon. There is still a risk that applying best management practice as a control may still not be sufficient to achieve the environmental outcomes sought for the KHCE.

The ARC identified the need to review the approach to sediment management in the region in its 2006-07 Annual Plan. This review has now been initiated primarily through an initial series of workshops and a report with input from key stakeholders will set out the issues and options to be considered through this review. The objectives of the review will be to identify issues associated with sediment generation and deposition in the Auckland Region and evaluate statutory and non-statutory options for the management of sediment (including integration with other policy areas).

The NRWSP identifies issues with land practices resulting in accelerated erosion and sediment-laden discharge. The plan focuses on water bodies and their margins, particularly on water quality, water flows and levels, aquatic ecosystems and riparian habitats. This plan covers the effects of land use activities on water and soil in Northland above the line of mean high water springs. The rules are based on whether an activity is on identified erosion-prone land, within a Riparian Management Zone, the area disturbed, timing of works, volume of earth moved and surface area, slope and geology. The NRC is currently looking at a plan change to the RWSP that will look at how to manage land disturbance, vegetation clearance and structures in the area above MHWS that are affected by coastal processes. For the NWSP, the NRC is looking at catchment management based approaches to address the impacts of sedimentation and nutrient discharges into rivers and the marine areas. This approach will seek to address issues for sediment and earthworks controls.

5.1.4.2 **Forestry**

In terms of vegetation removal for plantation forestry, the ARP: Sediment is generally more permissive for vegetation clearance providing it complies with the environmental standards in the plan. In order to be most effective for the KHCE, the standards approach requires enforcement and monitoring by the ARC. For the Northland Region, the rules are somewhat stronger for harvesting in riparian areas. Where trees are planted within 5m of a water body or the CMA, vegetation clearance is a discretionary activity. The NRC Council Officers are of the opinion that for managing the effects of forestry on the KHCE, the methods and standards in the plans work well. The NRC worked with forestry groups in developing these standards, in conjunction with other stakeholders such as the Department of Conservation.

5.1.4.3 **Farming/Stock Grazing**

The NRC has slightly stronger controls for farming than the ARC currently do. From July 2009, unauthorised access to and use of the CMA by stock will become prohibited under the Northland Regional Coastal Plan. The NRC has in a sense

'phased' in the stock exclusion rule and recognises the additional cost implications that the rule imposes on landowners. The NRC has highlighted the issues involved for farmers through advocacy, funding incentives and the NRC offers an 'Environment Fund' targeted to assist landowners in high priority ecologically sensitive locations or where coastal water quality is a high priority.

The ARC has no specific rules or controls to control sedimentation generated through grazing and stock access to waterways making enforcement difficult. Non-regulatory methods have been relied on through voluntary initiatives and incentive programmes for riparian planting. The ARC is also looking at fencing provisions for water bodies of the Air Land Water Plan. As an opportunity for integration and consistency in approach, the ARC could look at developing a similar approach to the NRC, with a phasing in of the rule in supported by incentives, advocacy, and education for landowners.

Key Issues:

- ❑ Attempts to assess the scale of influence of activities (earthworks, forestry, stock grazing) has been inhibited by a lack of environmental information and monitoring.
- ❑ Difficult to correlate policy effectiveness and methods of implementation with specific 'problem' areas of sedimentation in the Harbour.

Recommendation:

- ❑ Future studies of effects and rates of sedimentation in the KHCE should broaden their focus to include the Harbour catchment to gain a better understanding of all inputs of sediment that enter the KHCE.

5.1.5 Marine Biosecurity

Whilst the RMA does not specifically deal with biosecurity issues, regional councils have a management function under the Act associated with maintaining indigenous biological diversity. Marine biosecurity is governed by the Biosecurity Act, which provides for the preparation of both national and regional pest management strategies.

Four invasive plant pests pose the greatest threat to the KHCE - spartina, saltwater paspalum, Manchurian wild rice and sharp rush. According to the ASR study findings, spartina is present on mudflats near Oyster Point at the southern edge of the Harbour and is spreading. There is a difference in approach between the ARC and NRC in terms of controlling certain pest and weed species such as spartina. Spartina is considered to be a major issue for the KHCE and eradication of this pest requires significant resource. ARC takes a targeted control approach rather than a control through eradication approach for spartina as that taken by the NRC.

5.1.6 Aquaculture

Currently, there are 31 marine farm licenses/permits for the Kaipara Harbour and a total of 8 marine farms, located predominantly in the northern harbour, 2 of these are situated in the southern harbour and the remainder in the north.¹³

Part 12 A of the RMA provides the framework for the management of aquaculture. In order to establish a marine farm it must be located in an aquaculture management area (AMA) and a coastal permit must be obtained.

When the process to establish AMAs commenced, neither of the Regional Councils had developed a strategic framework for the management of the Harbour for aquaculture. The plans provided for new marine farms as a discretionary activity and to be considered on a case-by-case basis. For both Regional Councils, there is no specific policy approach towards the Kaipara Harbour in terms of aquaculture.

In 2001 the ARC proposed 5 potential AMAs within the southern Kaipara derived from a constraints mapping exercise. These were located to generally overlay the areas of existing marine farm applications that had been lodged prior to the Aquaculture Moratorium. One of these applications has been granted by the ARC and subsequently appealed. During this process, all of the AMAs were removed by the ARC. Variation 2 went on hold in 2002 in light of the new aquaculture legislation. Variation 3 that related to the AMAs within the South Kaipara Harbour was withdrawn in 2006. Currently, an application for a 100 ha marine farm in the southern harbour is in the final stages of the RMA process, and it is understood that the Environment Court is supportive of approval for 75 ha.

In 2003, the NRC proposed 4 potential AMAs within the northern Kaipara, also based on a constraints mapping exercise. Since then, the NRC has determined that the invited private plan change (IPPC) approach set out in the 2005 amendments to the RMA will be the primary mechanism for the establishment of AMAs in Northland. Under this approach, the Council will invite, by public notice, any person to submit a plan change request to establish an AMA. Plan Change 4 seeks to provide the policy framework that will apply to the establishment and management of activities within all existing and future proposed Marine 3 (Aquaculture) Management Areas.

The NRC publicly notified and released Proposed Plan Change 4 on 28 October 2006. The submission period for this plan change closed on 14 February 2007, and in total 333 submissions was received. Of submissions, 6% support the Council's proposed changes. A large number of submissions raised concerns that the plan does not specifically exclude marine farming from certain parts of Northland which submitters feel need special protection.¹⁴

In summary, both Regional Councils have adopted the invited private plan change procedure instead of undertaking a Council sponsored plan change themselves. Each private plan change application could be considered separately rather than through a collective or comprehensive approach.

¹³ 'Review of Environmental Information on Kaipara Harbour coastal environment' (draft) ASR (July 2007)

¹⁴ NRC Website summary of Proposed Plan Change 4 July 2007

Overall, it is considered that there is an absence of a strategic framework for the areas in the KHCE that are not suitable for aquaculture. Although some strategic direction is given through the MMA and CPA management area approach, there is opportunity for more direction for areas where aquaculture should be excluded. The ARC has not yet notified their approach to aquaculture through the RMA process, and therefore an opportunity exists for a more strategic approach for the KHCE to be taken in this regard.

Key Issue:

- ❑ There is a lack of strategic direction for aquaculture for areas for 'exclusion' in the KHCE.

Recommendation:

- ❑ Opportunity for ARC through variation process to the Coastal Plan to provide more strategic direction for areas in the KHCE that should be excluded from aquaculture activity.

5.1.7 Mangroves

There is widespread concern and anecdotal evidence that mangroves are encroaching into previously uncolonised areas within the KHCE. To address this issue, the NRC prepared Plan Change 3 to provide greater opportunity to remove or prune mangroves in specific circumstances. Hearings on submissions on Plan Change 3 were held in February 2006. Two appeals on the decisions were received by the Environment Court; however one appeal was struck out by the Court, as the appellant failed to respond to requests for information by the Court. The Council is currently in negotiations with the remaining appellant.

The ARC is currently preparing a plan change to the ARPC (Chapter 16) relating to mangroves. Since the time the ARPC was prepared the spread of mangroves has become a matter of increasing concern to a number of coastal communities in the Auckland Region, including southern parts of the Harbour.

5.1.8 Cumulative Effects

Matters of cumulative effect and precedent effects are not well contemplated for in the Regional Plans. The RMA framework relies on an 'effects based' approach which allows applicants general rights to have activities considered on a case-by-case basis. There is a common view held amongst the Council Officers that the cumulative effects of the smaller 'permitted' activities may be causing damage to the KHCE and that the scale of these cumulative effects is currently poorly understood. For example, cumulative effects of smaller permitted earthworks on individual residential sites where standard sediment controls are not being applied. It is difficult to argue cumulative effects under the RMA regime when the assessments of environmental effects are made on a case by case basis.

Sand extraction is another example where we do not know and cannot at this stage quantify if policy and methods of implementation are sufficient. Although the Kaipara Sand Study provided a good understanding of the sand resource within the harbour, with an incomplete understanding of the wider operation of coastal processes we cannot quantify the cumulative effects or project these effects into the future.

6 Policy Review - District Plans

6.1 Operative Kaipara District Plan (1997)

6.1.1 KD Plan Content and Scope

The current Kaipara District Plan was made operative in 1997. The Kaipara District Council is currently undertaking a review of the District Plan. The review is considering the issues of growth around the Kaipara Harbour and the specific visions and outcomes being sought by the community in this area.

Through the Kaipara District Plan, the coastal edge of the Kaipara Harbour has been recognised by a policy overlay over the existing Rural zoning, as opposed to a specific zone as used for coastal protection. The policy overlay provides a lower level of protection than for the coastal areas zoned in the District Plan. This is currently a reflection of lower rating of the natural character of the harbour. However, the use of overlays to reflect the KHCE is currently being considered through this review process.

The following table describes and provides a summary of the key policy approaches and anticipated environmental outcomes for the Kaipara District Plan that are considered relevant to the management of the KHCE.

6.1.2 Kaipara District Plan Description of Policy Outcomes

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
To recognise the special character of land in the coastal environment and control development activities within it.	Natural character of the land around Kaipara Harbour is recognised through a policy overlay area with specific rules and assessment criteria. Kaipara Harbour Environment Area' (KHEA) covers land in the Rural and Maori Purposes zones. Policies, rules and guidelines for KHEA focus on potential effects of land use activities and subdivision on natural character. Assessment criteria emphasise a heritage and landscape based approach to subdivision design which respects the natural landform and features and minimizes access and subsequent building related earthworks.
To provide for protection of outstanding features from inappropriate land use and subdivision activities and to identify and protect land which has special natural qualities and is sensitive to land use change.	Objectives, policies and rules with assessment criteria which consider the effects of subdivision and land use activities on landscape values in the rules relating to resource consent applications. A schedule of bush, wetland and other natural features are protected by rules in the Plan.
To recognise the natural character values of remnant indigenous forests, shrub land and wetland areas in the Kaipara Harbour Environment Area and to seek their long term protection and enhancement.	The KHEA policy area includes specific policy and rules on the clearance of naturally occurring indigenous vegetation in the KHEA, including the provision of information on the effects of activities on significant naturally occurring indigenous vegetation and natural character with all resource consent applications the KHEA. General tree rules specific to the coastal marine area include: A 2000m ² 'threshold' for vegetation of any height above which land use consent is required has been set. A separate 'threshold' has been set for specimen trees adjacent to the harbour (over metres in height and within 40 metres of the coastal marine area). Rules of the District Plan apply to all parts within 100 m of MHWS in order to give appropriate protection to pohutukawa that contribute to the natural values of the coastal environment.
To identify and protect land which has special cultural, historic, and is sensitive to land use change, from inappropriate land use or subdivision activities.	General objectives, policies and rule which ensure any archaeological sites are identified prior to any activity being carried out which could disturb such sites.
To plan for and develop a strategic network of public access ways to and alongside key water bodies.	KHEA policy area has little effective control over activities on reserves and other public open spaces – i.e. no rules on use of motorbikes, vehicles on foreshore and sand dunes, access to and uncontrolled grazing of livestock, and deposition of rubbish and materials. Wharves, jetties, landing facilities are discretionary activities in KHEA and Rural

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
	zones. Bylaws control some recreation related activities on some reserves, there are no rules or bylaws that apply to reserves under control of DoC.
To recognise and protect the rights Maori people have over their lands, forests, fisheries and other taonga (in accordance with the ToW).	General objectives and policies to recognise the special significance of waahi tapu to Maori and encourage protection, and to recognise the spiritual and life-giving values placed on water bodies by Maori. Rules of protection exist for waahi tapu sites.

6.2 Proposed Rodney District Plan (2000)

6.2.1 RD Plan Content and Scope

In November 2000 the Rodney District Council (RDC) released its Proposed District Plan which was publicly notified. This Plan is a review of the Operative Rodney District Plan (1993). It encompasses matters addressed in Plan Changes not yet made operative. Whilst the Proposed Plan has legal effect from the date of notification, the existing Operative Transitional Plan continues to have legal effect until the Proposed Plan becomes fully operative. This will happen once all submissions and appeals have been settled.

The Rodney District Plan Committee has completed the hearing of submissions to the Proposed District Plan 2000 and is currently in the process of adopting and releasing decisions on submissions. The Proposed Plan includes provisions and reference to the *'coastal environment'* (which are still subject to appeal) in accordance with the ARPS definition of coastal environment.

For the southern part of the harbour which is in the jurisdiction of RDC, the rural zoning provisions of the District Plan apply. These allow for subdivision (as a restricted discretionary activity) if an environmental benefit is provided such as covenanting bush. Where such an environmental benefit is not presented, subdivision is a non-complying activity under the Rural zones. There is no specific recognition of the KHCE through policies or objectives or any protective zoning for the land adjacent to the KHCE.

The following table describes and provides a summary of the key policy approaches and anticipated environmental outcomes for the Rodney District Plan that are considered relevant to the management of the KHCE.

6.2.2 Rodney DP Description of Policy Outcomes

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
<p>To ensure natural character and conservation value of open space along the coast, and within reserves, are maintained, managed and protected so they remain in a relatively unmodified state.</p>	<p>General objectives and policies to preserve the natural character of the coastal environment, and to protect land areas within the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The Plan identifies the Kaipara Harbour coastal environment as being 'predominantly unmodified'. The challenge is to preserve these areas and to protect from inappropriate subdivision, land use and development activities, however policy is not specific to KHCE.</p>
<p>To protect highly valued landscapes and geologically significant sites from inappropriate/insensitive building, development, subdivision, land uses and enhance where practicable.</p>	<p>Objectives and policies to manage 'Highly Valued Natural Resources' so they are preserved or protected or enhanced now and in the future, for their natural amenity, scenic and intrinsic values.</p> <p>'Highly Valued Natural Resources' have been identified and represent the 'best' in the District, they include 'significant natural areas' (SNA's), landscapes and geologically significant sites. The coastline, dune lakes and sandhills on the South Head Peninsula are given as examples of areas with special character that contribute to Rodney's identity. The Plan identifies areas of highly valued landscapes by way of zones/policy areas, and applies limits to the activities which can occur, and applies controls on location of structures within the landscape. The activities permitted in each zone are based on landscape values present. For geologically significant sites such as South Head Sandhills at the northern end of South – a Scheduled Activity status has been applied for protection of sites.</p>
<p>To maintain, manage, protect, and enhance highly valued vegetation and wildlife habitats.</p>	<p>Objectives and policies for SNA's to be maintained, enhanced, managed in a manner that ensures habitats and ecosystems remain resilient to stress, a wide representation of highly valued habitats and vegetation maintained. RDC has undertaken a survey of vegetation and wildlife habitats to identify those of high ecological value – SNAs are identified on planning maps and ranked based on the Rodney Ecological District Protected Natural Areas Programme.</p> <p>A zoning approach is taken for protecting these features: Open Space 1 (Conservation), Inland Waters Protection Zone, Low Intensity Landscape Protection Zone.</p>
<p>To avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of earthworks and vegetation removal on natural resources (soils, waterways, wetlands, habitats, native vegetation), and natural character, water quality and ecology of the coastal environment.</p>	<p>Policies for avoiding earthworks and vegetation removal on riparian and coastal margins or adjacent to wetlands.</p> <p>Regulatory methods involve restricting earthworks in areas adjacent to waterways and coastal areas – land modification through development controls. The rules seek to restrict these activities adjacent to waterbodies or coastal areas.</p> <p>Development controls are on earthworks and vegetation removal in areas prone to flooding, erosion and</p>

Anticipated Environmental Outcomes and Objectives	Policy Approach
	instability; earthworks and vegetation removal adjacent to waterbodies or coastal areas.
To recognise, and protect, and avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on a diverse and representative range of the District's Cultural Heritage Resources.	Objectives and policies to avoid, remedy, and mitigate effects of earthworks and vegetation removal on cultural heritage sites. The District Plan lists Cultural Heritage Resources (CHRs') in 4 lists and requires resource consent to alter or destroy them. It also includes lists of waahi tapu and archaeological sites. Modification of an item listed is a Restricted Discretionary activity and destruction of an item listed is Discretionary activity.
Objectives and policies to avoid, remedy, mitigate effects of earthworks and vegetation removal on ancestral lands, sites, waahi tapu, other taonga and mauri of waterbodies.	The District Plan lists CHRs' in 4 lists and requires resource consent to alter or destroy them. It also includes lists of waahi tapu and archaeological sites. Modification of an item listed is a Restricted Discretionary activity, and destruction of an item listed is Discretionary activity.
Public access should be enhanced to and along the CMA, and wetlands where this will have minimal adverse effects upon the environment, or public health and safety.	<p>Objectives and policies to maintain and enhance public access to and along the coast, wetlands, provided that it does not have significant adverse effects on the ecological/conservation values of either the access route or the area being accessed.</p> <p>Zoning through Open Space 1 (Conservation) applies to most esplanade reserves. Priority is given through policies to protection of conservation values and preservation of natural qualities of these open space areas. Open Space 3 (Water Access) applies to small parts of esplanade reserves and coastal reserves which facilities associated with public access and surface water activities may be suitably located.</p>

7 Key Findings – District Plans

7.1 General Policy Direction

Although both of the District Plans are at different stages of development, between the plans, there is broad strategic policy direction for coastal development that is consistent. The approach in both plans taken is to consolidate urban development in the existing developed areas and avoid urban development in rural coastal areas. This policy approach is implemented through district plan rules that provide for subdivision opportunities in townships and restrict subdivision in rural areas. Both district councils have conservation lot provisions in their District Plans as an incentive for environmental benefits.

7.2 Zoning Approach

For KDC, specific provision is given to the Kaipara Harbour through the Kaipara Harbour Policy Overlay. The provisions of this overlay place additional controls on earthworks and clearance of indigenous vegetation, and require additional information to be provided when a resource consent application is lodged. The overlay provides for ecological landscape provisions and additional assessment criteria, objectives and policies,

RDC use a zoning approach as the main mechanism to protect natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, watercourses and their margins. The land on the west coast adjoining the Kaipara Harbour is zoned 'General Rural' and is characterised by minimal subdivision and development. Specific policies seek to protect and enhance rural character and high amenity values. Other Rural zones are used to protect highly valued landscapes – Dune Lakes Zone includes the land areas related to and surrounding the dune lakes at Tomorata and South Head. This specific zone makes these areas different to the General Rural zone, and includes controls on building siting and restrictions on removal of native vegetation, earthworks and modification of wetlands. However, the Proposed RDC Plan offers no specific zoning or protection for the KHCE.

The eastern parts of the district were provided for through the 'East Coast Rural' zone and 'Landscape Protection' zone, however these sorts of plan provisions were not intended to carry over in the west for the Kaipara. A future variation will investigate the need for a coastal protection zone for the west coast.¹⁵ RDC Council Officers expressed the need for more specific and directive statements through a new zone for the west coast (i.e. the zone would outline elements/special features to be protected and identify special natural character areas for protection). Through the Proposed

¹⁵ (See RDC Decision Report 2263).

Rodney District Plan process amendments of a general nature have been made to – issues , objectives and policies of Chapter 6 - ‘Highly Valued Natural Resources’ to better address preservation and protection of the coastal environment. This is an interim measure in lieu of a formal review and investigation into a plan variation.¹⁶

As outlined previously, KDC is currently reviewing its District Plan. The plan is likely to place more onus on developers to take a more rigorous assessment of the effects of development in rural areas. Residential growth is to be focussed in Mangawhai in the east coast, while maintaining rural heartland and protecting the west coast (including Kaipara Harbour) as a wilderness area (high level direction from visioning exercises from the Kaipara LTCCP). KDC are commencing a review of the development of these plans provides a better opportunity to recognise the need to improve management of development in the coastal environment. A revised plan could provide stronger protection for coastal values of the harbour as well as better integrating with other planning documents affecting it. Through this process, KDC may need to take a more considered approach as to whether the margins for the Kaipara Harbour Policy Overlay are sufficient in terms of the KHCE and whether this overlay needs to be better aligned with the ARC definition of the ‘coastal environment’.

Key Issue:

- ❑ Lack of specific policy direction and zoning for KHCE in RDC.

Recommendation:

- ❑ RDC investigate a future coastal protection zone for the ‘west coast’ with specific direction for KHCE and opportunity for consistency in approach with KDC through Kaipara District Plan review process.
- ❑ KDC give stronger protection to Kaipara Harbour Policy Overlay through District Plan Review and take a considered approach to what constitutes the coastal environment for Kaipara Harbour, in line with the ARC RPS definition of ‘coastal environment’.

7.2.1 Subdivision, Use and Development

The District Plan provisions for coastal subdivision, use and development are markedly different between the two Districts. Traditionally, resource management issues for both District Councils have been focussed on coastal development pressures on the east coast, rather than the west. For KDC, subdivision to a minimum lot size of 4 ha is provided for as a controlled activity throughout the Rural Zone bordering the harbour.

This compares to subdivision with no environmental benefits being non-complying in the Rodney District. RDC has stronger subdivision controls in rural zones overall. The KDC policy approach is more permissive towards coastal subdivision.

¹⁶ (See RDC Decision Notice 2216 – Coastal Environment).

Subdivisions where wetlands are located are a key area of concern for RDC. The offer of environmental benefits to applicants to allow subdivision is achieved through the protection of wetland. However, mangroves in the privately owned areas of the CMA are being offered as part of the title and covenanted. This is achieved through the definition of wetland (in spite of area located below MHWS (i.e. within CMA) being outside the jurisdiction of the District Plan). The definition of a wetland has now been strengthened through a decision (subject to appeal) to the Proposed District Plan, however the changes to the definition will not have an immediate effect to the processing of applications and the subsequent environmental effect will take some time to follow through.¹⁷

There is an active programme of monitoring for subdivisions consents within RDC. A monthly report on what consents have been granted is prepared and linked to building consents so there is an opportunity for consideration of the effects of permitted earthworks. Internal integration between the Policy and the Consents team is currently good and continually improving. The Consents team has identified who in the Policy team should be consulted on for particular developments and forwards the information for comment on to Natural and Coastal Environments team. The Consents Team also invites ARC to meet on pre-lodgement meetings for some applications (e.g. for coastal development in Weiti River).

RDC currently operates under a transfer of powers from the ARC for the processing of a limited range of coastal permits. RDC Council Officers generally perceive this to be working well in terms of achieving more integrated management for the coastal environment.

In terms of subdivision monitoring, KDC implements monitoring at a consent level basis.

7.2.2 Sediment Controls

KDC's rules for earthworks in the KHEA policy area have been developed from a natural character perspective and recognise effects of earthworks for surface area and cut/fill rather than volume. The KDC rules have a 1000m² 'threshold', where consent is required for earthworks involving significant new tracking or roading, and a 2m high cut/fill 'threshold' has a length component.

In recognition of the need to protect the harbours and estuaries from sedimentation, RDC has subdivision incentives in General Rural zones are provided for land retirement and rehabilitation. The incentive applies to steep land and includes areas near the Hoteo River which drain to the Kaipara Harbour.

In terms of earthworks, there is a difference between earthworks controls for landscape protection zone (which are more stringent) and the general rural zone in Rodney District. Rules on native vegetation clearance are also less stringent in the Rural zone.

¹⁷ (Refer RDC Decision Notice 2140 – Protection of Wetlands Subdivision (7.14.3.3.2/Appendix 7C/ Chpt 3 Definitions)).

According to RDC Council Officers, the process of monitoring of earthworks consent conditions works well. There is a standard condition that the applicant contact RDC within 7 days of starting earthworks. All consents for earthworks are checked after 6 months and then put on another 6 month monitoring check.

However, given the fact that sedimentation is seen to be an increasing issue for the KHCE, this would suggest that consent conditions and monitoring of these conditions for both RDC and KDC would need further examination in order to determine whether the controls are working effectively. There is currently insufficient baseline information for sedimentation monitoring to be able to directly correlate areas where sedimentation is a problem in the KHCE and where consent conditions are not effective.

An opportunity exists for strengthening existing provisions for both RDC and KDC. For KDC this opportunity exists through the District Plan review. For the RDC, the Council is currently re-examining earthworks controls in the Rural Zone for areas of native vegetation, subdivision, vegetation removal, proximity to wetlands. These are all being looked at through decisions which are subject to appeals to the Proposed District Plan.

Key Issues:

- ❑ District Plan provisions for subdivision are markedly different.
- ❑ KDC does not carry out monitoring of subdivisions.

Recommendation:

- ❑ Investigate opportunities to develop more consistent subdivision provisions.
- ❑ KDC develop and implement a regime of subdivision monitoring. Costs of this monitoring are to be recovered from the consent holder.

8 Barriers to Integrated Management of KHCE

The following sets out and discusses the key barriers to achieving more integrated management of the KHCE.

8.1 Monitoring

The general lack of environmental information within the KHCE will continue to act as a barrier to achieve successful integrated management of the KHCE. As outlined previously, the ASR (draft) report finds that much of the monitoring carried out in the Harbour is largely insufficient to assess broad scale changes in the environmental quality of the harbour. Therefore, attempts to assess the scale of influence of activities is inhibited by general lack of environmental information.

The various resource consent monitoring programmes assessed as part of the ASR study also has limitations that prevent further assessment of broad scale environmental changes. Making it virtually impossible to detect trends, or through space and time.

To address these gaps, more comprehensive monitoring (through State of the Environment Monitoring) is recommended by ASR to be carried out for the northern Kaipara, as has been undertaken for the southern Kaipara. Comprehensive and integrated monitoring projects will be key and this will assist in determining effectiveness of policy and methods of implementation for the KHCE. Future policy development for the KHCE should seek to ensure more integration between anticipated environmental outcomes and monitoring and review processes.

Key Issue:

- ❑ Lack of baseline monitoring for KHCE and ability to assess effectiveness of policy and methods for environmental outcomes for KHCE.

Recommendation:

- ❑ Investigate opportunities for integrated monitoring projects between Councils.

9 Recommendations and Options

Set out below is a range of options that could be considered for more integrated management for KHCE. The options for further consideration have been prioritised for action and implementation against indicative timeframes.

9.1 Short Term Options (3 years)

9.1.1 Regional Plan Changes

- ❑ NRC to further define and provide for the 'coastal environment' through objectives and policies in these plans.
- ❑ ARC to investigate the opportunity through variation process to the Coastal Plan to provide more strategic direction for areas in the KHCE that should be excluded from aquaculture activity.

9.1.2 District Plan Reviews and Plan Changes

- ❑ RDC to investigate a future coastal protection zone for the 'west coast' with specific direction for KHCE and investigate the opportunity for consistency in approach with KDC through Kaipara District Plan review process.
- ❑ KDC to give stronger protection to Kaipara Harbour Policy Overlay through District Plan Review and further consider the consistency of the margins of the overlay with the ARC definition of 'coastal environment'.
- ❑ Investigate plan change opportunities to develop more consistent subdivision provisions between both District Plans.

9.1.3 Monitoring and Research

- ❑ Investigate opportunities for integrated monitoring projects or 'packages' between Councils.
- ❑ Future studies of effects and rates of sedimentation in the KHCE should broaden their focus to include the Harbour catchment to gain a better understanding of all inputs of sediment that enter the KHCE.
- ❑ Further evaluation and investigation is required into a comparison of approaches to water quality in terms of achieving desired environmental outcomes. (i.e. analysis to determine whether different approaches to water quality achieve similar or consistent environmental outcomes for KHCE).

- ❑ KDC develop and implement a formal regime of subdivision monitoring. Costs of this monitoring should be recovered from the consent holder.

9.2 Medium Term Options (3 – 5 years)

9.2.1 Non-Statutory Joint Harbour Plan

- ❑ A joint non-statutory plan 'Harbour Plan' or 'Harbour Strategy' could be developed over the next 3 – 5 years. Such a non-statutory plan would identify all resource management issues relevant to the Kaipara Harbour, and would form the basis of community input to the integrated management of the Harbour. It is anticipated that such a plan would outline natural values, Maori and cultural heritage values, recreation and access opportunities, the values and views held by coastal communities, the physical infrastructure (roading, wharves, jetties, other structures), and constraints associated with the Harbour.
- ❑ Although a non-statutory plan, a Harbour Plan or Strategy could set out objectives and policies to be used to guide implementation of the strategy and provide guidance and direction for management and planning decisions for Kaipara Harbour. In developing regional plan and district plan changes, these policies could be used as a starting point for the various Councils.
- ❑ A relevant case study is detailed in the box below for Ohiwa Harbour, whereby one regional council and two district councils have developed an 'umbrella' strategic document in order to promote and achieve integrated resource management for the harbour. Not only does this strategy identify the key issues of concern for the community, the anticipated environmental outcomes for Ohiwa Harbour are also identified through this process.

Case Study – Draft Ohiwa Harbour Strategy (2006)

The Draft Ohiwa Harbour Strategy covers the Ohiwa Harbour and the land catchment area that feeds into it. Control of Ohiwa Harbour and its catchment is divided among three units of local government – Opokiti District Council, Whakatane District Council and Environment Bay of Plenty. Additional statutory responsibilities are exercised by other agencies, such as DoC and MoF. Several iwi and hapu exercise their role as kaitiaki of the Harbour.

The strategy sets out the vision for the harbour, identifies issues, key community values and aspirations, and recommends actions to achieve those. The strategy contains a combination of a framework to assess future planning and management against a set of detailed actions, and promotes integrated resource management – integration of the variety of plans, processes and practices used by Councils, government departments, iwi and the community. The strategy was developed through a ‘communicative’ approach which provided for community input to identify main concerns and aspirations. Whilst the strategy is a non-statutory document and does not contain rules, it does refer to plans that do have rules and makes recommendations on changes to district and regional plans in order to achieve greater consistency with one another and the vision for the harbour.

The benefits of a Harbour Plan would be that a more strategic or proactive approach to achieving environmental outcomes for KHCE would be enabled. Through the consultative process (with the public, key stakeholders, regional and district councils) a considerable degree of consensus as to the desired environmental outcomes for the Harbour would be achieved.

A plan focused on the KHCE would be more outcome-orientated and seek a more effective integrated approach to achieving sustainable management. The objectives and policies would be targeted in achieving the desired environmental outcomes.

Once such a plan is developed, consideration could then be given to whether elements of it (or all) should be developed into a statutory plan – either by changing the NRC and ARC Coastal Plans, or committing to a joint statutory plan.

Further consideration to preparing a Harbour Plan is necessary as the plan would require a significant amount of time in terms of development, research, consultation, and approval. And would also have significant resourcing issues (staff resource and financial costs) for all councils involved.

9.3 Long Term Options (7 – 10 years)

9.3.1 Statutory Joint Harbour Plan

The RMA provides a framework to enable integrated management. This includes ensuring consistency of policies and plan provisions between adjacent local authorities and providing the ability to develop joint statutory plans.

Under Section 80 of the RMA, two or more local authorities may agree to jointly prepare, implement, and administer a combined district plan for the whole or any part of their combined districts. Similarly, two or more regional councils may jointly prepare and administer a regional plan for any part of their combined regions.

In the long term, one option for consideration would be for ARC and NRC to jointly prepare a regional coastal plan for the Kaipara Harbour coastal marine area. Or alternatively, to encompass the 'coastal environment' of Kaipara Harbour if NRC has progressed to further define and provide for the 'coastal environment' in their existing Coastal Plan.

10 Bibliography

ASR Marine Consulting & Research (July 2007), Review of Environmental Information on the Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment, draft report for ARC.

Auckland Regional Council (2007), Kaipara Harbour Coastal Environment Scoping Report.

Northland Regional Council (2007), Regional Policy Statement Efficiency and Effectiveness Report.

11 Appendix 1

Council Officer Interview Questions

The intention of the meetings is to discuss with policy and consenting representatives from the four relevant territorial authorities, the planning and management frameworks and structures with respect to the Kaipara Harbour. These interviews intend to supplement the review of planning documents that is currently being undertaken.

With respect to the policy outcomes identified in your plans / policy statements:

- What do you see as the key environmental/policy outcomes being sought for the coastal environment in the Kaipara Harbour by your policy and planning documents? (i.e. we have identified a number of management themes such as protection of natural character, maintaining water quality, preservation significant indigenous vegetation, public access).
- How well do you think the current plans / policy documents are achieving the desired environmental and policy outcomes? (e.g. do you think the overall policy direction is clear?)
- Are there any areas of specific work underway to address any areas of 'weakness'?

With respect to the implementation of methods to achieve policy outcomes identified:

- Are the methods for implementation your Council has identified in their relevant policy statement / plan sufficient in achieving the anticipated environmental and policy outcomes identified above?
- For example, do you have comment on whether:
 - The methods and rules are being implemented?
 - Is policy reflected in consent decisions (approvals / declines) made by council i.e. in accordance with the policy or heading off in a different direction?
 - Do the consent conditions reflect the policy and giving effect to the policies
 - To what degree/extent monitoring of consent conditions is being undertaken to confirm monitoring of condition?
 - To what degree/extent the council carries out monitoring to assess whether environmental outcomes are being achieved?

Comment on the specific comparison of approaches between Council's

- Comment on opportunities and constraints for achieving the policy outcomes described.
- Do you see any inconsistencies/gaps between the various documents? Are the outcomes shared / useful?
- Do you find neighbouring or regional councils have a different or same approach – does this help/or constrain integrated management and implementation of policy outcomes?
- Are there ways the plan(s) could be changed to lead to better integrated management across local government boundaries? Is this being done through the Plan Changes to the NRC Coastal Plan?

12 Appendix 2

LTCCP Activities

Rodney District LTCCP 2006 - 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> RDC will formulate policy and plans on coastal compartment planning, aquaculture, marine protected areas, and the exercise of its jurisdiction under transfer of powers. <input type="checkbox"/> RDC will formulate policy and plans on bio-security and pest management <input type="checkbox"/> RDC will work with local communities to retain coastal facility levels. <input type="checkbox"/> RDC will implement an integrated local response to protecting biodiversity. <input type="checkbox"/> RDC will formulate policy on coastal environment for native trees, bush, wetlands and biodiversity (in the next 3 years). <input type="checkbox"/> Respond to climate change by adapting to sea level rise. <input type="checkbox"/> RDC will endeavour to use 'soft' engineering solutions such as planting and dune protection where possible.
Kaipara District LTCCP 2006 - 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> KDC to administer Biodiversity Fund for financial assistance to stakeholders to assist in protection and enhancement of Kaipara's environment <input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater infiltration to be addressed to minimise wastewater overflows and improve treatment standards <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of Reserves and Open Spaces Strategy. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish and administer a Heritage Fund for financial assistance to stakeholders to assist in protection and enhancement.
ARC LTCCP 2006 - 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Policy continue to be developed to refine rules in RP: Coastal and policy to support possible variations to RP: Coastal for aquaculture, coastal occupation charging, and mangrove management. <input type="checkbox"/> 2007-15 monitoring of marine ecology and water quality parameters to continue. <input type="checkbox"/> 2007-10 policy to improve integrated management of Kaipara Harbour coastal environment. <input type="checkbox"/> Land Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete a policy review for Regional Plan Sediment Control between 2007-08. <input type="checkbox"/> Through the Catchment Restoration Programme increase the fencing and planting of riparian margins in the region by 15km per year between 2007-15.

- ❑ Natural Heritage Conservation
 - ❑ Work with regional community to raise awareness, advocate for, conservation of natural treasures.
 - ❑ Protect and enhance significant habitats and endangered species in regional parks.
 - ❑ Continue pest management work across the region in accordance with Regional Pest Management Strategy.
 - ❑ Complete regional landscape review 2007-08
 - ❑ Implement biodiversity advocacy and conservation programme
 - ❑ Continue habitat restoration and species management programmes on regional parks.
 - ❑ Controlling and eradicating targeted invasive plant species such as spartina and rhamnus, to prevent significant adverse effects on ecosystems.
 - ❑ Implementation of comprehensive plant pest control programme in targeted areas on the regional parks estate.
- ❑ Open Space and Recreation - Waipiro Bay on South Kaipara Peninsula to transfer part ownership to Rodney District Council or investigate potential sale of development rights associated with the parkland and affect such a sale if it is found feasible.

Northland Regional Community Plan - 2006-2016

Natural environment (2007-2009):

- ❑ Prioritise and develop management plans for specific harbour or coastal areas and/or communities.
- ❑ Maintain and where necessary, improve stormwater quality management, in conjunction with district councils.
- ❑ Maintain and where necessary improve coastal water quality at bathing sites and marine farming areas in conjunction with district councils, Northland Health, industry and the Ministry for the Environment.
- ❑ Continue to provide and enhance harbour safety and maritime navigation aids in conjunction with the Maritime New Zealand.
- ❑ Integrate regional and district planning provisions to ensure a consistent approach in coastal management strategies.
- ❑ Work with district councils to improve on-shore facilities adjacent to mooring areas.
- ❑ Maintain and where necessary improve soil conservation as an integral part of all land use and development activity in conjunction with district councils.
- ❑ Develop and implement a Biosecurity Emergency Action Plan for Northland together with Biosecurity New Zealand, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Department of Conservation, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Fisheries.
- ❑ Develop and implement a plan to identify and protect Northland land with high biodiversity values, together with landowners, relevant government agencies and the district councils.
- ❑ Prepare strategies to eradicate or control pest organisms that threaten indigenous biodiversity and agricultural values, together with relevant government agencies.

- ❑ Encourage innovative community and residential planning for coastal developments.
- ❑ Support organisations providing incentives that recognise responsible environmental behaviour.
Recreational and leisure opportunities (2007-2009)
- ❑ Support and encourage secured access to appropriate parts of the coastline, marine and natural environment for the purposes of recreation in conjunction with district councils and the Department of Conservation.
- ❑ Support the continued development of recreational infrastructure in the natural environment such as boat-launching ramps, toilets, walking tracks in conjunction with district councils and the Department of Conservation.
- ❑ Continue to support and encourage secured access to the coastline, marine and natural environment for the purposes of recreation in conjunction with district councils and the Department of Conservation.
- ❑ Continue to support the continued development of recreational infrastructure in the natural environment such as boat-ramps, toilets, walking tracks etc in conjunction with district councils and the Department of Conservation.