

4.4 Non-regulatory policies

This section contains policies that outline non-regulatory actions required to help achieve the objectives of this Regional Policy Statement. Within this section the policies are presented in numeric order, although in the summary table, below, the policy titles are listed under topic headings.

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Policy 64: Supporting environmental enhancement initiatives – non-regulatory

Take a whole of catchment approach that recognises the inter-relationship between land and water, and support environmental enhancement initiatives to restore and enhance:

- (a) coastal features, ecosystems and habitats;
- (b) aquatic ecosystems and habitats; and
- (c) indigenous ecosystems and habitats.

Explanation

The natural character of the coast has been degraded. Restoring and enhancing *coastal features* and *ecosystems* helps restore natural character and enhances people’s use and enjoyment of the coastal environment.

A regulatory approach cannot restore aquatic ecosystems from the effects of many existing and historical activities. Resource consent holders cannot be obliged to remedy existing effects unless they are caused by their particular activity. Where historical activities have affected an aquatic ecosystem, restoration measures such as riparian planting or the removal of concrete linings or contaminated material can help restore the habitat.

Setting right the effects of historical activities that have reduced the extent and quality of indigenous ecosystems and habitats in the region can be facilitated by providing information about the importance of these ecosystems and habitats, and by providing financial incentives to promote their maintenance, enhancement and restoration. Wellington Regional Council and district and city councils can, through their operations, play a role in the restoration and

Table 2: Coastal environment
Objective 3
Table 4: Fresh water
Objective 13
Table 6a Indigenous biodiversity
Objective 16
Methods 5, 8, 12, 27, 28, 29, 52 & 53

enhancement of indigenous ecosystems and habitats – such as, in reserve management plans, pest control, storm-water management, and roadside vegetation management.

Taking a whole of catchment approach is promoted within this Regional Policy Statement. It means considering the full mix of purposes, uses or activities within a catchment, in terms of how these interact and contribute to outcomes within the catchment and for receiving environments beyond – such as in relation to indigenous ecosystems, soil productivity, water quality, erosion and stormwater control, or natural hazards. This approach suggests a need to work with multiple parties to establish shared objectives for a catchment and to ensure uses and activities are working towards the same goals or at least are not working against their attainment.

Table 3: Energy, infrastructure and waste Objectives 9 & 11
Table 4: Freshwater Objective 14
Methods 10, 11, 17, 32, 33 & 55

Policy 65: Promoting efficient use and conservation of resources – non-regulatory

To promote conservation and efficient use of resources by:

- (a) reducing, reusing and recycling waste;
- (b) using water and energy efficiently; and
- (c) conserving water and energy.

Explanation

For waste management, using resources efficiently means following the waste hierarchy: reducing use of resources, including unnecessary packaging; reusing unwanted goods that are still 'fit for purpose'; recycling new products from discarded materials; and recovering resources – such as energy – before disposing of the remaining waste safely. If resources are used efficiently, the amount of unwanted materials disposed of at landfills and at sewage treatment plants will be reduced.

Similar principles apply for reducing energy demand and conserving energy. This includes minimising use, reducing the need to use and being more efficient in use.

Some of the ways to efficiently use and conserve water include reducing water demand and wastage by:

- setting targets for reducing leakage from reticulated water supplies within each district
- providing information to water suppliers and water users on how to conserve water and use it as efficiently as possible
- providing information about long-term rainfall and drought predictions
- investigating the use of transferable water permits.

Leaks from water reticulation systems can waste over 15 per cent of treated water. Water supply authorities already have programmes for repair and maintenance, and it is vital that targets are set so that development of such programmes continues and wastage is reduced.

Water efficient household appliances and garden watering tied to garden needs, along with fixing dripping taps and planting locally appropriate plants, are some of the ways that people could make the water delivered to their house go further.

Weather predictions can help people prepare for possible weather extremes, for example by buying in stock feed or ensuring water reserves are at full capacity. Transferring water permits, or parts of water permits, allows allocated water to be used by as many people as the resource can sustain.

Policy 66: Enhancing involvement of tangata whenua in resource management decision-making – non-regulatory

To enhance involvement of tangata whenua in resource management decision-making by improving opportunities for iwi authority representatives to participate in local authority decision-making.

Explanation

Active engagement by *local authorities* with *tangata whenua* requires an open mind and a genuine willingness to allow the views of tangata whenua representatives to influence decision-making.

Maori have a long history of settlement of the Wellington region, known as Te Upoko o te Ika a Maui (the head of the fish of Maui). *Iwi authority* refers to the body that represents an iwi and is recognised by that iwi as having the authority to do so. Refer to chapter 2 for a list of the current iwi authorities representing tangata whenua in the Wellington region.

Policy 67: Maintaining and enhancing a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form – non-regulatory

To maintain and enhance a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form by:

- (a) implementing the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol;
- (b) promoting best practice on the location and design of rural residential development;
- (c) recognising and enhancing the role of the region's open space network; and
- (d) encouraging a range of housing types and developments to meet the community's social and economic needs, including affordable housing and improve the health, safety and well-being of the community.

Explanation

The *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol* promotes a national cross-sector commitment to the principles of good urban design. It provides access to resources, training and a network of signatories with a range of urban design experience.

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol plays an important role in improving the quality of urban design in the region.

Rural residential activities offer investment, development and growth opportunities, but present challenges in terms of rural productivity, provision of infrastructure and sustainable management.

Best practice guidance will look at how districts and cities can benefit from rural residential activities while:

- maintaining rural economies that are functioning and productive
- managing sensitive environmental and amenity values
- avoiding natural hazards
- considering infrastructure limitations and requirements
- managing urban development and protecting future urban development areas.

The region's open space network has helped define the region's existing urban form and is a fundamental element of quality of life for residents. The region's open space is managed by a number of organisations, including Wellington Regional Council, the region's district and city councils and the Department of Conservation. Policy 67 seeks to enhance the role of the region's open space network in supporting the region's compact form. This will require authorities to work together and identify gaps and opportunities.

Table 10: Resource management with tangata whenua Objective 22 Methods 31, 36 & 37 Consider alongside policies 1 to 60

Table 9: Regional form, design and function Objective 21 Methods 39, 40, 44 & 46

Housing design and the quality of housing developments can have a significant role in improving housing choice and affordability. Different housing types, particularly those that are less land intensive, can offer greater opportunities for more affordable housing. Likewise, housing developments that incorporate, or are well connected to, transport infrastructure and services, employment opportunities and community centres are likely to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of residents.

At present housing in the region generally becomes more affordable with distance from the regional central business district and other places of work. This has negative implications in terms of travel demand, associated living costs, access to employment and community networks. It can also limit economic development opportunities by reducing the ability of businesses to attract and retain a workforce with appropriate skills.

Table 11: Soils and minerals
Objective 28
Methods 15, 29, 35 & 54

Policy 68: Minimising soil erosion – non-regulatory

To minimise soil erosion by encouraging sustainable land management practices and taking a whole of catchment approach.

Explanation

Sustainable land management practices are methods and techniques that reduce soil erosion – such as soil conservation plantings, land retirement and conservation tilling. These practices can apply to activities such as pastoral farming, plantation forestry, subdivisions and roading.

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Table 11: Soils and minerals
Objective 29
Methods 15 & 29

Policy 69: Preventing long-term soil deterioration – non-regulatory

To retain healthy soil ecosystem functioning by promoting and encouraging sustainable agricultural practices that do not cause soil contamination, compaction or loss of or minerals or nutrients.

Explanation

Soil compaction, mineral and/or nutrient depletion, and soil contamination may cause irreversible degradation to soil ecosystem health. Retaining soil on land avoids contamination of water bodies.

Soil compaction occurs when the weight of livestock or heavy machinery compresses soil, causing it to lose pore space. Soil contamination, in the context of this policy, refers to the presence of pesticides and heavy metals in the natural soil environment.