

Report 09.18
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Committee Council
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Proposed Regional Policy Statement

1. Purpose

To seek Council's approval to publicly notify the proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington region.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The proposed Regional Policy Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act) (Attachment 1 – provided to councillors separately).

Regional policy statements are intended to promote the purpose of the Act and integrate management of a region's natural and physical resources.

The content of the proposed Regional Policy Statement is the same as provided to councillors in December and again in January with the addition of minor editorial changes and the user guide.

The proposed Regional Policy Statement will be given effect to through district and regional plans. This is a stronger requirement than in the past, when plans were required to be 'not inconsistent with' the Regional Policy Statement. The Regional Land Transport Strategy is required to be 'not inconsistent with' the Regional Policy Statement.

In addition, when local authorities in the region are deciding on resource consents and designations, they will be required to have regard to the Regional Policy Statement.

4. The review process

Regional policy statements are mandatory and must be reviewed every 10 years. The current Regional Policy Statement was made operative in May 1995.

The review of the Regional Policy Statement began with the release of *Measuring up, the State of the Environment Report for the Wellington region 2005*, which reported on progress towards the objectives in the current Regional Policy Statement.

In May 2006, we released a discussion document *Our region – their future* which sought feedback on the issues the community thought needed to be addressed by the Regional Policy Statement. The discussion document was distributed widely. Feedback was also sought in response to a two page advertisement in community newspapers.

In June 2007, draft provisions (issues, objectives, policies and methods) were released for comment to city and district councils and key stakeholders. The availability of the draft provisions was also advertised on Greater Wellington's website and in 'Elements'.

At this point several city and district council's specifically requested that Greater Wellington carry out wider consultation on a full draft document prior to releasing a proposed Regional Policy Statement.

Greater Wellington released the draft Regional Policy Statement in March 2008. The draft Regional Policy Statement provided Greater Wellington with an opportunity to further discuss and revise content prior to formal notification. Key changes resulting from feedback include:

- The inclusion of a user guide at the start of the document.
- Deletion of Appendix 1, which listed regionally significant sites in the coastal environment. The appendix has been replaced by a new coastal environment policy requiring district and regional plans to discourage development in areas in the coastal environment with high natural character. There is also a new policy which outlines the factors that must be considered when assessing natural character.
- Changes to draft policy 52 (now proposed policy 54) to clarify what needs to be considered in achieving a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form.
- A new policy (policy 13) requiring Greater Wellington to control the discharge of stormwater to land and/or water where stormwater contains ecotoxic contaminants (for example, heavy metals).

- A new policy (policy 2) requiring Greater Wellington to address the effects of fine particulate discharges (for example, smoke from domestic fires) to improve human health, in locations where the national environmental standard for air quality is being exceeded.

5. Section 32 Reports

Eleven reports (Attachments 2-11 provided to Councillors separately) have been prepared by Greater Wellington to address the requirements in accordance with section 32 of the Act. These reports summarise the Council's evaluation of:

- the extent to which each objective is the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of the Act; and
- whether, having regard to their efficiency and effectiveness, the policies and methods are the most appropriate for achieving the objectives.

Each section 32 report addresses a topic covered by the Regional Policy Statement (as listed in chapter 3).

The section 32 reports will be made available when the proposed Regional Policy Statement is publicly notified.

6. Resource Management Act (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendments Bill

On 19 February the Resource Management Act (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill was released and referred to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee.

Greater Wellington staff have reviewed the bill and consider that the proposed changes do not necessitate a need to delay the public notification of the proposed Regional Policy Statement.

The Council should however be aware of one amendment, which if carried through into the final amendment act, may require a small variation to the proposed Regional Policy Statement. The Policy Statement currently requires that councils commence implementation of the policies in section 4.1 (that direct district and regional plans), when carrying out their full, ten year, plan review. The bill however removes the need to review district plans every 10 years. Greater Wellington would therefore need to discuss, with the region's city and district councils, what and how changes should be made in response to this amendment.

7. Communication

The consultation period for the proposed Regional Policy Statement will commence on 21 March and close on 25 May 2009.

A communication plan has been prepared, and the following is a brief outline of key elements in the communication plan.

7.1 Public notification

There will be a public notice in the newspapers on the week commencing 21 March.

Publication	Date
Dominion Post	Saturday 21 March
Hutt News	Tuesday 24 March
Kapi Mana News	Tuesday 24 March
Upper Hutt Leader	Wednesday 24 March
Wairarapa News	Wednesday 25 March
Wairarapa Times Age	Wednesday 25 March
Kapiti Observer	Thursday 26 March
The Wellingtonian	Thursday 26 March

7.2 Regional Policy Statement review newsletter

A newsletter (Regional Policy Statement review Newsletter No. 6) will be sent to a wide range of organisations and people on 19 March. The newsletter will discuss the role of a Regional Policy Statement, the content and let people know how they can request a copy and make a submission.

A newsletters will be enclosed with all copies of the proposed Regional Policy Statement, and bundles will be sent to information desks at all city and district councils and libraries.

7.3 Proposed document

The proposed Regional Policy Statement will be sent to chief executives, policy staff and councillors at each of the city and district councils. Full copies will also be sent to Ara Tahi representatives and a wide range of interested parties.

The document will be freely available to any person who requests a copy. Hard copy or CD versions will be available.

7.4 Web site

Electronic copies of the document will be available on the web site www.gw.govt.nz/rps. The site will also contain all the Section 32 reports, and other background information that has been prepared as part of the review process.

7.5 Information to city and district councils

A letter will be sent from the Chair to each Mayor following this meeting (copies can also be distributed to all city and district councillors). The letter will inform them of the upcoming release of the proposed Regional Policy Statement.

Copies of the full draft Regional Policy Statement and the newsletter will then be sent to all city and district council councillors on 19 March.

Arrangements are also being made so discussion between Greater Wellington and the region's city and district council elected representatives can occur during the consultation period.

Staff have meet with planning staff from each of the region's city and district councils and given staff an update of changes made and talked about how submissions have been responded to.

8. Process from here

Once submissions have been received, staff will prepare a summary of submissions. The availability of the summary of submissions will be then publicly notified and further submissions sought. Once further submissions have been received staff will prepare hearing reports and organise hearing dates. Hearings are expected to commence in October or November this year.

9. Recommendations

That the Council:

1. ***Receives*** the report.
2. ***Notes*** the content of the report.
3. ***Approves*** the release of the proposed Regional Policy Statement and the Section 32 Reports.
4. ***Notes*** that submissions will be sought between 21 March and 25 May 2009.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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- Attachment 1:** Proposed Regional Policy Statement
- Attachment 2:** Section 32 Report - Soils and minerals
- Attachment 3:** Section 32 Report - Natural hazards
- Attachment 4:** Section 32 Report - Regional form, design and function
- Attachment 5:** Section 32 Report - Fresh water
- Attachment 6:** Section 32 Report - Coastal environment
- Attachment 7:** Section 32 Report - Air quality
- Attachment 8:** Section 32 Report - Energy, infrastructure and waste
- Attachment 9:** Section 32 Report - Historic heritage
- Attachment 10:** Section 32 Report - Indigenous ecosystems
- Attachment 11:** Section 32 Report - Landscape
- Attachment 12:** Section 32 Report - Resource management with tangata whenua