Regional Policy Statement
for Northland

May 2016

Putting Northland first

NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

Status of the Regional Policy Statement

All provisions in this Regional Policy Statement were made operative on 9 May 2016 except for:

(a) Issue 2.6(g) and related parts of the explanation

(b) Policy 6.1.2 and explanation

(c) Method 6.1.5 and explanation

These provisions relate to the use of genetic engineering and the release of genetically modified organisms to the environment, and were made operative on 14 June 2018.

Amendments to the Regional Policy Statement

Amendment	**Amendment description**	**Operative / active date**	**Editor**
Clause 20A correction	Addition of text to the explanation of Issue 2.5 describing the Maori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004, as directed by Environment Court decision (2015) NZEnvC 143.	19 May 2016	Ben Lee
Clause 20A correction	Amend numbering of issue 2.6 to start at (a) – previously started at (g).	14 June 2018	Ben Lee
Clause 20A	Policy 4.4.2 – amend "…Objective 3.5" to "…Objective 3.15."	14 June 2018	Ben Lee

Resource Management Act 1991

APPROVAL OF REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR NORTHLAND

The Northland Regional Council by resolution dated 19 April 2016, approved and made operative the Regional Policy Statement for Northland for Northland contained herein*, pursuant to the powers and authorities vested in it by the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991.

This approval becomes operative on 9 May 2016.

The Common seal of the Northland Regional Council was hereto affixed in the presence of:

Chief Executive Officer

**There are some provisions which are not operative. These provisions relate to the use of genetic engineering and the release of genetically modified organisms to the environment and are:*

(d) Issue 2.6(g) and related explanation

(e) Policy 6.1.2 and explanation

(f) Method 6.1.5 and explanation

Northland
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Approval of provisions in the Regional Policy Statement for Northland

The Northland Regional Council by resolution dated 15 May 2018, approved and made operative the following provisions of the Regional Policy Statement for Northland, pursuant to the powers and authorities vested in it by the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991:

- Issue 2.6(g) and related explanation
- Policy 6.1.2 and explanation
- Method 6.1.5 and explanation

This approval becomes operative on 14 June 2018.

The common seal of the Northland Regional Council was hereto affixed in the presence of:

THE NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL
THE COMMON SEAL OF

Malcolm Nicolson
Chief Executive Officer

Bill Shepherd
Chairman

Witness

Name: Jonathan Gibbard
GM - Governance and Engagement

Witness

Name: Christine Taylor
Governance Support Manager

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Chairs' foreword

This Regional Policy Statement for Northland represents five years' work involving strong community and stakeholder engagement from a broad spectrum of interests.

It's our second Regional Policy Statement for Northland and provides the broad direction and framework for managing Northland's natural and physical resources. The Regional Policy Statement is a regional document (not a regional council document) that effects how people, businesses and industry use, develop and protect Northland's resources and it will influence the content of future regional and district plans.

Developing this Regional Policy Statement has provided us with a unique opportunity to address what we want Northland's future to look like, and to support our vision by putting in place a sustainable management document that will manage Northland's resources in their widest sense.

The issues included in the Regional Policy Statement are targeted at a high level and focus on fresh and coastal water, indigenous ecosystems and species, economic wellbeing, regional form, issues of significance to tangata whenua, natural hazards, and natural character, landscapes and historic heritage.

We believe the Regional Policy Statement will achieve greater integrated management of our natural resources – how they are used, the value we place on them and the community's aspirations for their management.

Economic development has been identified as a key objective and this Regional Policy Statement provides greater support and seeks to encourage economic wellbeing in Northland including significantly more emphasis on how, where and when to provide infrastructure.

This document will shape Northland's future – how it looks, the resources we have and how we live our lives.

Bill Shepherd
Chairman
Northland Regional Council

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This includes the purpose and key principles of the Regional Policy Statement and the Resource Management Act 1991. The relationship of the Regional Policy Statement to other policy statements and plans is also described.

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the Regional Policy Statement

The Regional Policy Statement's role is to promote sustainable management of Northland's natural and physical resources. It does this by:

- Providing an overview of the region's resource management issues; and
- Setting out policies and methods to achieve integrated management of Northland's natural and physical resources.

The Regional Policy Statement (RPS) is the vehicle for identifying and dealing with the significant resource management issues in Northland. It tackles the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources, particularly air, land, water and the coastal marine area where Northland's councils have specific functional responsibilities.

The regional council must have a RPS in place at all times – this will be Northland's second one. The Resource Management Act 1991 prescribes what the RPS must cover (section 62) and the responsibilities of respective councils (sections 30 and 31).

1.2 Purpose and principles of the Resource Management Act 1991

The Regional Policy Statement has been prepared in accordance with the purpose and principles of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Section 5 of the RMA outlines the purpose of the RMA: "…to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources". Section 5 goes on to define sustainable management:

> ***sustainable management*** *means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while -*
>
> *(a) sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and*
>
> *(b) safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and*
>
> *(c) avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.*

Sections 6, 7 and 8 of the RMA also help guide how sustainable management should be achieved.

1.3 Regional Policy Statement guiding principles

The regional council developed the following principles with public input when it set about developing this Regional Policy Statement. These principles were used to guide the initial development of the Regional Policy Statement and are now embodied in the content of the document. These principles have no legal weight.

People
People are at the heart of this Regional Policy Statement. All district and regional plans should have regard to people and their need for a healthy environment, well managed resources, jobs and business opportunities for their wellbeing and long-term economic success.

Economy within the environment
This Regional Policy Statement has been developed giving weight to both long-term economic and environmental considerations. It recognises that a healthy Northland economy needs a healthy environment. This Regional Policy Statement is enabling. It balances improving the economy and using resources wisely with managing and investing in the environment to achieve our future aspirations for improvement in Northland and our wellbeing. It is effects-based and should lead to effects-based implementation.

Partnership
Working with others is efficient, increases the sense of ownership, and provides opportunities for innovation and enduring success. Encouraging and supporting individual, landowner, key stakeholder and community involvement and action is critical to effective resource management in Northland.

Partnership with tangata whenua
In recognition of the partnership principles in the Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the benefits of working in partnership, tangata whenua have a key role in resource management.

Local government's role and responsibility
Local government plays an important role in managing Northland's natural and physical resources and the competing interests and values. It enables the use, development and protection of those resources to meet the needs of people and safeguards the environmental bottom lines, Northland's special places and the things we value. In doing so, it maintains Northland's capacity to generate benefits for future generations.

Affordability
The Regional Policy Statement recognises that some resource use practices will have to change so that natural and physical resources can be managed in a sustainable manner. Where these changes would impose a significant financial burden, or a practical solution is not currently available, a reasonable time is to be allowed for desired environmental results or outcomes to be achieved, taking into account the need for change and the costs and effects of not acting, or not acting quickly. Affordability acknowledges intergenerational equity and fairness.

Adaptive management
Managing Northland's natural and physical resources is a complex task. The environment, resources and systems are dynamic and so is our understanding of them. We have information gaps to fill. Our management regime must therefore be adaptive and be able to respond to change to achieve sustainable resource management.

Effectiveness
Effective resource management in Northland will involve a mixture of advocacy, education, information provision, encouragement, incentives, co-production / partnership, codes of practice, regulation, economic / market-based instruments, process reforms, and other forms of intervention and support.

The Regional Policy Statement contains the minimum regulation: to meet legal requirements, community needs and values as derived from evidence and the process for its development. It recognises that solutions must be affordable, fit for purpose and achieve the objectives set out. We have matched our policy instruments to the resource management issues and opportunities identified. In line with affordability, we have avoided unnecessary compliance costs.

1.4 Relationship of the Regional Policy Statement to other policy statements and plans

The Regional Policy Statement is the key document for identifying issues related to the development, use and protection of resources in Northland and establishing a management framework for dealing with them. It is, however, only part of a broader policy and planning framework established under the Resource Management Act (RMA). The RMA provides for a hierarchy of resource management policy statements and plans related to the three principal levels of government – central, regional and district.

The following provides a summary of the different resource management planning documents produced by central government and the regional and district councils.

Central government

National policy statements and national environmental standards
National policy statements are prepared by central government and cover matters of national significance. Regional and district-level planning documents prepared under the RMA must give effect to national policy statements. The RMA requires a New Zealand coastal policy statement (prepared by the Minister of Conservation) to be in place at all times. The RMA also states that the Minister for the Environment may prepare a national policy statement for other matters of national significance.

Central government can also prepare national environmental standards – these are technical standards relating to the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources. Such national standards provide an opportunity to promote the use of consistent standards, requirements or practises nationally. National standards override existing provisions in plans that require a lesser standard.

For details of specific national policy statements and national environmental standards, refer to the Ministry for the Environment website: www.mfe.govt.nz.

Regional council

Regional Policy Statement and regional plans
In addition to the Regional Policy Statement, the regional council is required to prepare a Regional Coastal Plan for Northland. This is intended to assist the regional council, in conjunction with the Minister of Conservation, to manage the coastal marine area where each has specific functional responsibilities. The coastal marine area generally encompasses the foreshore, seabed, coastal water and the air space above the water, between mean high water springs and the outer limits of the territorial sea.

The regional council may also develop other regional plans that will assist it to carry out its functions under the RMA. For details of specific regional plans, refer to the regional council's website: www.nrc.govt.nz/regionalplans

District council

District plans
Each district council in Northland is required to have a district plan. These plans assist the district councils to carry out their specific functional responsibilities under the RMA, particularly those relating to controlling the effects of land use and land subdivision, and the provision of associated public works and utilities. Like regional plans, district plans can contain rules.

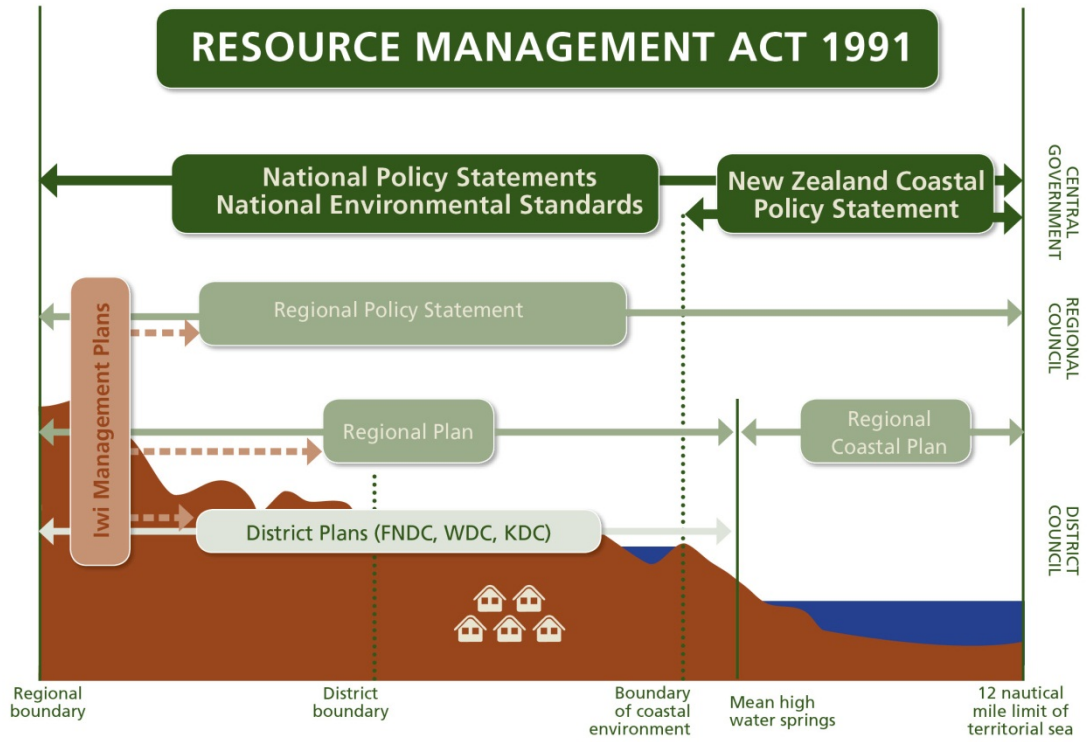
The RMA requires that district plans must "give effect" to the regional policy statement of a region and must "not be inconsistent" with regional plans.

Iwi and hapū planning documents
The RMA requires that planning documents recognised by an iwi authority, such as iwi and hapū management plans, be taken into account in the preparation of regional policy statements and regional and district plans.

Management plans and strategies
The RMA requires a regional council, when preparing a regional policy statement, to have regard to management plans and strategies prepared under other acts. This includes conservation management strategies and plans prepared by the Department of Conservation and sports fish and game management plans prepared under the Conservation Act 1987.

Environmental Protection Authority
The Environmental Protection Authority administers and makes recommendations to the Minister for the Environment on the processing of nationally significant consent applications, plan changes, and notices of requirement. Section 142(3) of the Resource Management Act lists factors that the Minister may consider in deciding whether a matter is of national significance.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship of the Regional Policy Statement to other policy statements and plans:



1.5 Integrated management

This Regional Policy Statement is about the integrated management of Northland's natural and physical resources.

Integrated resource management means considering the environment as a whole. The Resource Management Act (RMA) definition of "environment" includes not only natural and physical resources and ecosystems, but also amenity values and social, economic, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions. Achieving integrated resource management therefore requires consideration of all these elements and their interactions. For example, recognising that change (or the effects of human activities) in one area or on one resource can affect other parts of a complex and interconnected system and that there are various ways that resources are used and valued. Also, consideration needs to be given to the various sets of understanding about resources and how they should be managed. This is most apparent with the inclusion of kaitiakitanga and matauranga Māori methodologies into 'mainstream' RMA implementation.

To achieve integrated management, it is essential that the policies, plans and actions of all those involved in resource management (government agencies, regional and district councils, iwi, and the community) are co-ordinated.

The need for integration between resource management authorities is also required under the RMA in terms of dealing with cross-boundary issues (section 62). These issues can arise in a number of situations but generally fall into two categories: those related to preparation and review of plans; and those related to administration of plans and associated resource consents.

The Regional Policy Statement is built on working better together. The regional and district councils will consult, collaborate and continue to build relationships with other resource management organisations to achieve integrated management. Specific tools include:

(a) Reviewing district and regional plans to give effect to this Regional Policy Statement;

(b) Working together on resource consents, plan changes and the development of combined planning documents as appropriate (refer Method 6.1(c));

(c) Working together to understand the long-term growth and economic development opportunities and threats and the spatial pattern of land use and development (refer Method 5.2.5);

(d) Promoting a collaborative and consistent approach to enhance and manage regionally significant infrastructure (refer Method 5.3.4);

(e) Clearly defining the resource management roles and responsibilities of the regional and district councils (refer Roles and Responsibilities Table 1);

(f) Transferring and delegating functions, powers and duties to other authorities, including iwi authorities, as appropriate (refer Method 6.1.6);

(g) Developing and implementing the protocols to clarify and improve tangata whenua involvement in resource management planning in Northland (refer Methods 8.1.6 and 8.2.2);

(h) Working with other resource management organisations to achieve a consistent and integrated approach to managing natural and physical resources; and

(i) Working with adjoining councils to identify, discuss and address cross-boundary issues.

1.6 Statement of regional and district council responsibilities

The following tables set out the respective roles and responsibilities of the regional and district councils as required by section 62(1)(i) of the Resource Management Act (RMA).

Natural hazards – responsibilities for controlling the use of land to avoid or mitigate natural hazards or any group of hazards.

Parts of Northland	**Responsibility for specifying objectives, policies, methods including rules**	**Refer to Policy/Method**
In the coastal marine area and beds of rivers, lakes and other water bodies	Regional council	7.2.2, 7.2.3, 7.2.4(4), 7.2.4(5)
Where buildings have been materially damaged in a 10-year flood or a high risk coastal hazard area	Regional council	7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.1.7(8)

All other land and surface water in lakes and rivers[1]	Regional and district council	Part 7

Hazardous substances – responsibilities for controlling the use of land to prevent or mitigate the adverse effects of the storage, use, disposal, or transportation of hazardous substances.

Parts of Northland	Responsibility for specifying objectives, policies, methods including rules	Refer to Policy/Method
Land in the coastal marine area and beds of rivers, lakes and other water bodies	Regional council[2]	Not applicable[3]
All other land and surface water in lakes and rivers[2]	District council	Not applicable[3]

Note: This approach is consistent with the Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulation 2011, which outlines district council responsibilities in more detail.

Indigenous biological diversity – responsibilities for the control of the use of land to maintain indigenous biological diversity.

Parts of Northland	Responsibility for specifying objectives, policies, methods including rules	Refer to Policy/Method
In water bodies (including wetlands); in, on, or under the beds of rivers and lakes; in the coastal marine area	Regional council	4.4, 4.7.1
All other land and surface water in lakes and rivers[2]	District council	4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.3(2), 4.4.3(3), 4.4.4, 4.4.5, 4.7.1

1.7 Statutory acknowledgements

A "statutory acknowledgement" is a formal acknowledgement by the Crown of the mana of tangata whenua over a specific area. It recognises the particular cultural, spiritual, historical or traditional association of an iwi or hapū with the site, which is known as a Statutory Area. Statutory Areas only relate to Crown-owned land and include areas of land, geographic features, lakes, rivers, wetlands and coastal marine areas.

Specific details of statutory acknowledgements relevant to Northland are contained within the document *Te Ture Whakamana ngā Iwi o Taitokerau: Statutory acknowledgements in Northland*.

[1] RMA section 31(1)(e) – the control of any actual or potential effects of activities in relation to the surface of water in rivers and lakes is a district council function.
[2] The regional council retains all control over discharges to land, air and water – these include any discharge of hazardous substances.
3 There are no corresponding policies or methods as hazardous substances are not considered a regionally significant issue for the Regional Policy Statement to address. Refer to the companion document "Regional Policy Statement for Northland – Issues assessed not to be regionally significant" for further details.

It is anticipated that further statutory acknowledgements will be agreed between the Crown and tangata whenua during the lifetime of the Regional Policy Statement. These statutory acknowledgements will be recognised in the companion document as they are enacted.

This statement and the related companion document to the Regional Policy Statement for Northland are required by Treaty of Waitangi settlement legislation, are for public information only, and are neither part of the Regional Policy Statement nor subject to the provisions of the First Schedule to the Resource Management Act 1991.

1.8 User guide to the Regional Policy Statement

Part 1 (this part) contains the **Introduction.** This includes the purpose and key principles of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) and the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The relationship of the RPS to other policy statements and plans is also described.

Part 2 contains the significant resource management **Issues** for Northland.

Part 3 contains the **Objectives.** These are the desired outcomes and goals of the Regional Policy Statement.

Parts 4 to 8 contain the **Policies** and **Methods**, grouped as follows:

- Land, water and common resources
- Regional form and infrastructure
- Supporting economic development
- Natural hazards
- Tangata whenua.

A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making. A policy indicates a commitment to a general course of action to achieve an objective. A method is a practical action by which a policy is to be put into effect.

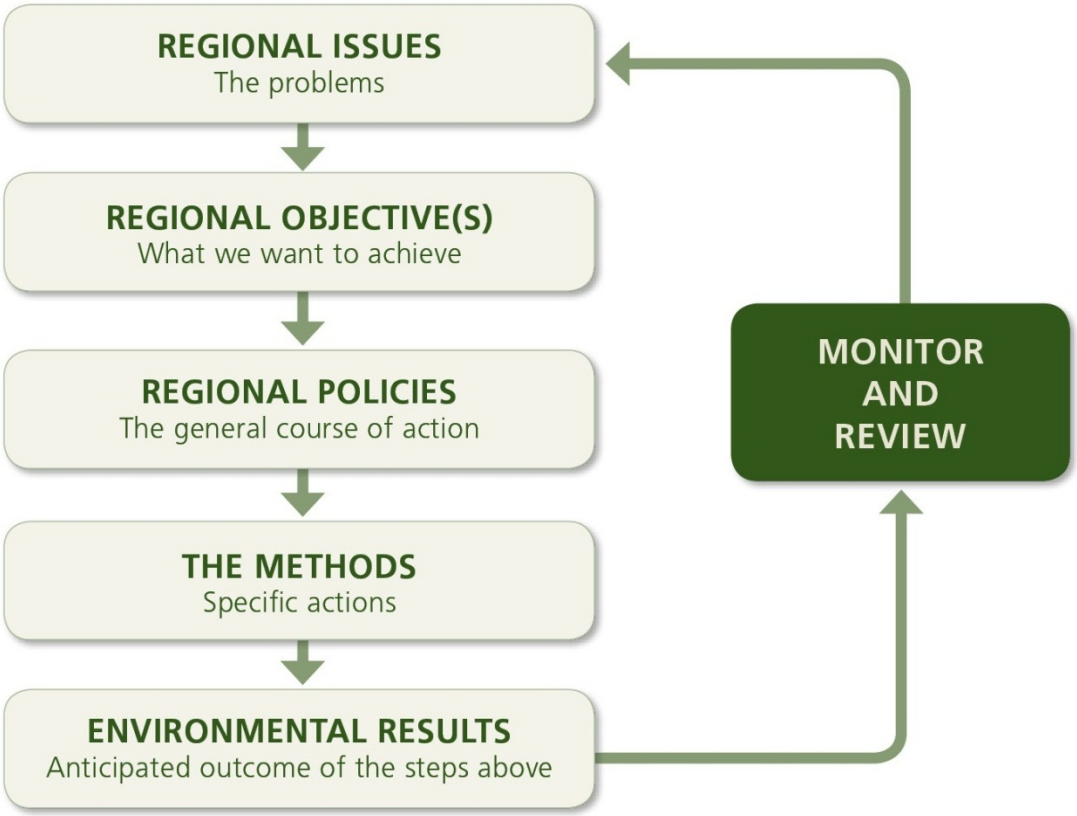
Explanations are provided for all policies and methods and include the principal reasons for their inclusion.

Part 9 contains the **Environmental results anticipated**. These are the expected results of implementing the policies and methods and are closely related to the objectives.

Part 10 contains the **Review and monitoring procedures**. It outlines how we will monitor the objectives, policies and methods.

The RPS contains a number of terms which have particular meanings. Many of these are derived from the RMA or other Statutes. Others have been established by courts and other bodies including the regional council. The **Glossary** contains definitions of a number of key terms used in the RPS.

The diagram below illustrates the connection between the issues, objectives, policies, methods, environmental results anticipated and the monitoring and review cycle.


REGIONAL ISSUES
The problems
REGIONAL OBJECTIVE(S)
What we want to achieve
REGIONAL POLICIES
The general course of action
THE METHODS
Specific actions
ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS
Anticipated outcome of the steps above
MONITOR AND REVIEW

PART 2: ISSUES

This section contains the significant resource management issues and issues of significance to iwi authorities of Northland, as follows:

2.1 – Fresh and coastal water

2.2 – Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

2.3 –Infrastructure and economic activities

2.4 – Regional form

2.5 – Issues of significance to tangata whenua – participation in resource management

2.6 – Issues of significant to tangata whenua – natural and physical resource

2.7 – Natural hazards

2.8 – Natural character, features/landscapes and historic heritage.

2 Issues

2.1 Fresh and coastal water

The key pressures on Northland's fresh and coastal water resources are:

(a) Increasing demand for surface and ground water resources in some catchments;

(b) Climate change;

(c) Elevated levels of fine sediments, nutrients, and faecal pathogens in freshwater bodies, estuaries, and harbours, mainly from diffuse run-off and leaching from land used for primary production, eroding beds and banks of streams and rivers, historical human induced erosion, and in some areas discharges of untreated and poorly treated wastewater and stormwater.

(d) Drainage and diversion of wetlands;

(e) Water temperature outside of its natural ranges mainly due to the reduced extent and quality of riparian plant cover, and altered flows in streams and rivers in productive and urban environments; and

(f) Dissolved oxygen outside of its natural ranges due to reduced riparian plant cover, excessive aquatic plant and algae growth, elevated levels of organic matter from discharges and run-off, and altered flows.

The significant consequences of these pressures include:

(a) Modification and loss of aquatic ecosystems resulting in reduced diversity, abundance and range of indigenous species;

(b) Reduction of natural character and amenity values;

(c) Increased health risks from swimming at and eating shellfish and other mahinga kai from some popular recreational and cultural sites;

(d) Increased health risks from drinking untreated water in some rural areas;

(e) Diminished cultural and spiritual values of water and its associated ecosystems, particularly those of Māori (for example, mauri); and

(f) Constraints on the productivity and expansion of water-dependent industries, due to reduced water quality and the finite and changing availability of water resources.

Issue 2.1 is addressed by the following objectives:

3.1 Integrated catchment management

3.2 Region-wide water quality

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

3.5 Enabling economic wellbeing

3.10 Use and allocation of common resources

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage

3.15 Active management

Explanation:

Water is fundamental to life, it is necessary for a functioning society, it drives the economy and it is central to our cultural identities as a source of enjoyment and reflection and historical connection. For Māori in particular water has cultural and spiritual significance.

Northland has high rainfall and water is generally abundant in most areas. However, in some catchments water availability is coming under pressure due to extraction, which needs to be balanced against the need to ensure ecological flows and water levels are available to safeguard the life-supporting capacity of aquatic ecosystems.

Available information suggests that water use in Northland is not compromising high flows and the seasonal distributions of flows in rivers. The more common situation in some catchments is an increased frequency and duration of low flows.

The predicted effects of climate change in Northland include higher temperatures, a decrease in annual rainfall, and more frequent droughts and heavy rain events. This will lead to additional pressures on water users and aquatic ecosystems. Security of supply is an important consideration when managing available water because reliability for extraction is reduced with higher levels of allocation.

Like the rest of New Zealand, Northland's water quality varies depending on past and present land use and development. It also varies due to geology and soils. In general terms, water quality is high in native forested headlands and then reduces in quality as it flows through modified lowland catchments. Almost all of Northland's rivers drain to and influence water quality in estuaries and harbours.

Water quality management has been mainly focused on addressing point source (direct) discharges of contaminants. However, with considerable progress in the way direct discharges are managed, attention is being focused on non-point source (diffuse) discharges, particularly of sediments, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) and faecal pathogens (sickness causing viruses, bacteria, and protozoa). It is now widely understood that these diffuse source contaminants are the major cause of poor quality in rivers, estuaries and harbours however, in some areas poorly treated and untreated direct discharges of wastewater and stormwater continue to have impacts in terms of faecal pathogens and nutrients. Water in open coastal areas is almost always in a natural state (uncontaminated).

Elevated levels of fine sediments and nutrients have a range of impacts on aquatic ecosystems and species. In estuaries and harbours, elevated loads of sediment smother and interfere with benthic organisms such as shellfish. Sediment also reduces water clarity, which in turn reduces the amount of light available to algal and aquatic plant species like seagrass, a key habitat for fish such as juvenile snapper. Higher levels of sediment also impact on amenity and recreational values, and navigation.

Elevated levels of nutrients can cause the excessive growth of aquatic algae and plants, which in turn can limit oxygen availability, with potential effects on aquatic fauna such as fish.

The reduced extent of riparian plant cover has a direct impact on the amount of sediment, nutrients, and faecal matter that can enter water. In addition, with less shade cover more sunlight enters water resulting in higher temperatures and lower

dissolved oxygen levels. These factors drive the growth of nuisance plants and algae.

The loss and modification of Northland's aquatic ecosystems impacts on mahinga kai and fisheries, natural character and recreational and amenity values.

Discharge and run-off of human and animal faecal matter into water can result in various faecal pathogens such as protozoa (cryptosporidium and giardia) and viruses (norovirus and rotavirus) being present. These pathogens can be a significant public health risk in relation to swimming and consumption of raw shellfish. They are not known to impact on aquatic ecology.

In Northland, monitoring indicates that most popular swimming sites are almost always suitable for swimming. However, a number of mostly freshwater sites are not always likely to be suitable. Monitoring has also indicated that during and after heavy rain there are likely to be unacceptable health risks associated with eating shellfish collected from the inner areas of harbours and estuaries. Faecal source tracking has shown that the main sources of poor microbial water quality are birds, improperly managed ruminants (like cattle and sheep) and in some areas, partially and untreated wastewater.

Some Northlanders in rural areas use untreated water from rivers and streams for their domestic supply. However, it is important to note that there are potential health risks associated with using untreated water from rivers and streams for personal and domestic uses even from those that appear to be of a high quality.

Based on monitoring and research there are likely to be very few rivers in Northland, including rivers in native forested catchments, which have microbiological water quality that meets the New Zealand drinking water standard for public water supply. While water from the region's rivers and streams is unlikely to be suitable for drinking without treatment, many of its aquifers are within Ministry of Health standards.

Reduced water quality also impacts primary industries. For example, poor water quality affects the health of stock and the ability to harvest and sell shellfish. In the long run, improving water quality is likely to improve Northland's productivity.

Because use and development will always have some effects it is unrealistic to expect good water quality and water availability everywhere, however there is considerable scope for improvement.

In particular, progress is needed in the way land is used and managed to reduce diffuse run-off and leaching. Ongoing investment is also needed to maintain and upgrade wastewater infrastructure in some areas.

Lastly, because water is generally a common resource, users have an obligation to avoid, remedy, or mitigate the adverse effects of their activities. This duty extends beyond complying with rules or conditions of resource consents.

2.2 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

The key pressures on Northland's indigenous terrestrial, freshwater, and coastal marine ecosystems and species are:

(a) Elevated levels of fine sediments, nutrients, and faecal pathogens in freshwater bodies, estuaries, and harbours, mainly from diffuse run-off and leaching from land use for primary production, eroding beds and banks of streams and rivers, historical human induced erosion, and in some areas discharges of untreated and poorly treated wastewater and stormwater.

(b) Pest species, including terrestrial, aquatic and marine pest plants, animals and organisms, and some domestic cats and dogs;

(c) Modification and loss of wetlands, including by drainage and diversion of water within and adjoining wetlands and as a result of stock access; and

(d) Fragmentation, loss and isolation of populations and communities of indigenous species due to habitat loss, land use changes and vegetation clearance.

Issue 2.2 is addressed by the following objectives:

3.1 Integrated catchment management

3.2 Region-wide water quality

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage

3.15 Active management

Explanation:
New Zealand's unique and diverse ecosystems and their species are the result of millions of years of evolution shaped by isolation, geology and climate.

Since the arrival of Māori, humans have relied on many of these ecosystems and species, and the environments that they encompass, for survival and progress. However, this has come at a large, mostly unintentional cost.

In a relatively short period of time, human impact has resulted in extensive clearance of land and broad-scale extinctions of indigenous species. Prior to humans, more than 80% of New Zealand was covered in forest – by the early 2000's forest cover had reduced to 24.8% of the country's total land area. The introduction of pest animals and clearing of forests has driven 57 species of native birds to extinction.

New Zealand's freshwater and marine ecosystems have also undergone huge changes due to fishing, the modification of land in and around rivers and the coast, and the large inputs of sediment and nutrients. For example, the clearing of forests has dramatically changed how water moves and the beds within many rivers and streams. As a result indigenous biodiversity is more threatened in freshwater ecosystems than in any other ecosystem.

Indigenous biodiversity in the marine environment is equally important. Marine species make up almost one-third of New Zealand's total number of described native species, although this proportion is rapidly changing as new species are being discovered.

Despite massive changes to its landscapes and the extinctions of many species, Northland is particularly fortunate to still contain a wide diversity of ecosystems and an unusually high number of indigenous species (a number of which are found only in Northland).

Not only are these remaining ecosystems and species extremely important for natural heritage and ecological integrity, they are also highly cherished for recreation, amenity, and spiritual values. Māori in particular have strong genealogical connections with indigenous biodiversity.

Indigenous ecosystems and species also provide other valuable benefits and services, like mitigating natural hazards and underpinning fisheries, agriculture, and tourism.

However, indigenous biodiversity remains under pressure. In Northland, for example, particularly modified and vulnerable types of ecosystems include:

(a) Lowland forests, shrublands and gumlands;
(b) Ephemeral, brackish and freshwater wetlands;
(c) Lakes, rivers and streams, including coastal and headwater streams;
(d) Flood plains and riparian zones;
(e) Dune systems, including dune lakes;
(f) Estuaries and harbours;
(g) Rocky reefs and areas of seagrass;
(h) Habitat of threatened species, including Maui's dolphin, NZ fairy tern and NZ dotterel;
(i) Intertidal areas that provide significant feeding and roosting areas for wader birds; and
(j) Ecosystems that have high species and/or habitat diversity or ecological sequences that are rare, unusual, uncommon or endangered.

Some of the most critically threatened species in New Zealand are found in Northland, including 28 plants, 36 terrestrial animals and five aquatic animal species.

The key pressures on indigenous species and their ecosystems are pest plants and animals, pollution and habitat loss and modification.

Pest species, including terrestrial, aquatic and marine pest plants, animals and organisms reduce and displace indigenous species and in turn have a profound influence on the functioning and structure of ecosystems.

Elevated levels of nutrients and sediments in freshwater bodies, estuaries and harbours may have acute and chronic effects on indigenous flora and fauna and change the structure of aquatic ecosystems and of wetlands.

Reduced and fragmented ecosystems, including barriers to fish passage, can restrict the movement of indigenous species and the availability of food.

The alteration of flows and levels in water bodies also reduces and modifies habitats and ecological processes. For example, less than 5% of Northland's wetlands remain as a result of drainage, water diversion, disconnection and disturbance – some wetland types are now close to being lost forever.
While our indigenous ecosystems will never return to their prehuman states, we can maintain and restore some of them to healthy functioning states including in production and urban environments without compromising our economy. Doing so

will reduce the threatened status of many species, have benefits for water quality and quantity and contribute to Northland's economic, social and cultural wellbeing.

2.3 Economic potential and social wellbeing

Northland has not effectively and sustainably managed its natural and physical resources to fully realise its economic potential and social wellbeing. Limiting factors include:

- *(a) Common natural resources not being used and allocated efficiently, particularly where there is significant demand;*
- *(b) Subdivision, use and development, particularly residential development, that compromise either:*
  - *(i) existing and future productive activities and use of land; or*
  - *(ii) regionally significant infrastructure;*
- *(c) Regionally significant infrastructure not available or sufficient to support development and community needs;*
- *(d) Poor security of energy supply;*
- *(e) Degraded state and availability of natural resources;*
- *(f) Regulation and compliance costs deterring investment; and*
- *(g) Unjustified and inconsistent application of the Resource Management Act 1991 in district and regional plans.*

Issue 2.3 is addressed by the following objectives:

3.1 Integrated catchment management
3.5 Economic activities
3.6 Economic activities – reverse sensitivity and sterilisation
3.7 Regionally significant infrastructure
3.8 Efficient and effective infrastructure
3.9 Security of energy supply
3.10 Use and allocation of common resources
3.11 Regional form

Explanation:
There are many reasons why Northland is not fully realising its economic potential and social wellbeing. The Regional Policy Statement covers only the factors that it has any real ability to influence, both now and in the future.

The quality of our natural environment and resource management decisions (like choices about land use, management of existing and future infrastructure, and use of natural resources like wind, coastal and freshwater, geothermal resources and minerals) influence the economic strength and prosperity of Northland and its contribution to the national economy.

Common natural resources, such as coastal water space and freshwater, are limited. It makes sense we make the 'best' use of these resources, especially where demand is high and the resource is important for Northland's economy.

There are also situations where the adverse effects of an activity may impact on an existing economic activity. For example, aquaculture relies on good water quality which can be impacted by animal effluent and inadequate sewage treatment.

The land is Northland's most significant economic asset and there is only so much of it. Subdivision, use and development, particularly residential, can have the effect of making it difficult for existing and future productive uses and infrastructure to operate (reverse sensitivity) or develop (sterilising the land). Productive activities include economic activities that use the soil and/or minerals in the ground (such as mining, farming and horticulture), those that use the space the land provides (like intensive farming, processing, manufacturing and oil refining) and other industrial and commercial uses.

Reverse sensitivity describes the effect that new use and development can have on existing activities in an area. It usually results from the people involved in a newly-established activity (such as residential development) complaining about the effects of existing activities (for example, noise, smells or agrichemical sprays from an established horticultural operator). This can have the effect of imposing economic burdens, or operational limitations, on the existing activities that can reduce their viability.

The sterilising of land for future productive uses from residential development occurs in two ways. Firstly, subdivision invariably increases the value of the land. Often this increases the value of the land to a point where it's uneconomical to use it in any other way, other than for residential purposes. Secondly, the more people living in an area, the more difficult it is to undertake new activities, especially where the effects are greater or different from the existing activity. Essentially, the more people live in an area, the less likely that the area can be used for any new productive purposes.

Regionally significant infrastructure is the infrastructure essential for the social and economic functioning of Northland. Northland also needs this type of infrastructure to attract investment and development opportunities as well as help complement and support Auckland and other regions.

Regionally significant infrastructure may include infrastructure such as:

- Significant utility services (water, energy, waste);
- Renewable electricity generation;
- Strategic communications facilities;
- Strategic transport networks;
- Major health care institutions including hospitals;
- Significant educational facilities; and
- Other infrastructure of importance to Northland.

The economic and natural resources to develop important infrastructure can however be limited. This means that Northland has not always been able to afford to build the infrastructure it needs or a limit is placed on where it is able to be located.

Generation and energy supply is critical for the economy and community wellbeing. The situation has improved considerably in the last 15 years with the geothermal generation from Ngāwhā and the Wairua Falls hydro scheme, however, Northland still generates a lot less electricity than we use. Most of our energy (electricity and natural gas) is transmitted through Auckland. If the transmission networks are damaged or their operation, maintenance upgrading and development is otherwise compromised as a result of inappropriate subdivision, use and development,

particularly residential development, it can impact on the electricity supply to Northland and affect the operations of nationally significant industries such as the Marsden Point oil refinery.

The state and availability of natural resources is relatively more important for Northland's economy than for many other regions in New Zealand. About 20% - 25% of Northland's Gross Domestic Product is derived either directly (farming, forestry, fishing and mining) or indirectly (the processing of these products and tourism) from the use of natural resources. For example, aquaculture and commercial shellfish gathering rely on good quality water.

Poor quality regulation and high compliance costs can act as a brake on business growth, investment and job creation. Councils need to be mindful of the impact of regulation on the economy – good quality regulation can be used to stimulate economic growth. The Ministry of Economic Development has identified that compliance costs can act as a brake on business growth.

Consistency in interpreting and implementing the law has been identified by government as a desirable yet problematic feature of any regulatory environment. Businesses require a reasonable degree of certainty to operate with confidence, especially when it comes to investing, but they also often want individually tailored approaches (that is, flexibility).

There are benefits, costs and risks associated with both consistency and flexibility. Variations in management approaches are more likely to be accepted if there is a clear justification for them. If the justification is not clear, then perceptions of fairness and equity are likely to suffer. Costs of compliance are not likely to be accepted, people are less likely to comply voluntarily and businesses may not be attracted. Variations that reflect local circumstances are likely to be legitimate; variations based on poor performance are not. Approaches that are effects-based, consistent, create a level playing field and can combine the best aspects of certainty and flexibility, such as performance standards, are most likely to be supported.

2.4 Regional form

Unplanned and un-coordinated development and poor urban design can lead to reduced levels of amenity, higher infrastructure costs, and reduced community wellbeing.

Issue 2.4 is addressed by the following objectives:

3.6 Economic activities – reverse sensitivity and sterilisation

3.8 Efficient and effective infrastructure

3.11 Regional form

Explanation:
Regional form is about the physical arrangement within and between urban and rural communities. Under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), Northland's physical resources, including buildings and infrastructure, must be sustainably managed.

These resources are important for our social, cultural, and economic wellbeing, including our mental and physical health, our sense of place and safety, and our ability to access services.

Ad-hoc / un-planned subdivision, use and development in inappropriate locations have had adverse effects on our urban and rural communities. It has resulted in reduced levels of service, unplanned infrastructure extensions / upgrades and reduced the viability of business through reverse sensitivity. This in turn has adverse effects on the surrounding communities.

Northland only has one city (Whāngārei) but it also has a number of towns and urban areas that have grown rapidly in the last 10 years. These include Kerikeri, Mangawhai, Bream Bay and Paihia and some coastal communities such as Tutukākā, Pārua Bay and Taipā / Mangōnui.

Alongside the growth of our urban areas, there has been demand for rural residential or lifestyle type development, particularly in rural locations surrounding our larger towns and in rural areas near the coast.

It is important that our urban and rural areas are serviced by appropriate infrastructure, are sustainable and able to provide a safe and healthy environment for their residents and visitors. It is also important our rural areas are productive and provide for a variety of uses and that our urban areas are energy efficient and sustainable.

Good planning and urban design can improve Northlanders' social and cultural wellbeing, strengthen our sense of place, enhance our ability to access services and connect with friends and our wider community. When it is done well planning and urban design can ensure that our special natural places are protected, enhance amenity values and attract economic opportunities.

Quality of infrastructure and quality of life are key factors in creating a successful region. Good planning and urban design can have significant positive effects on both.

2.5 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – participation in resource management

The following issues have been identified by iwi authorities as regionally significant as they relate to tangata whenua participation in resource management:

(a) There is inadequate provision for the early and effective participation of tangata whenua as partners in regional council resource management decision-making processes affecting natural and physical resources;

(b) The lack of recognition and provision for the sustainable management of Māori land and returned Treaty settlement assets by tangata whenua;

(c) Current use of Māori land may not provide for the sustainable social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of tangata whenua. In particular, the importance and role of marae and papa kāinga has not been acknowledged in the past by the regional and district councils;

(d) Mātauranga Māori is not sufficiently recognised and used in the ongoing management and monitoring of natural and physical resources; and

(e) The inclusion of Māori concepts, values and practices within resource management processes is frequently limited and ineffective.

Issue 2.5 is addressed by the following objectives:

3.12 Tangata whenua role in decision-making *3.15 Active management*

Explanation:
Section 62(1)(b) of the Resource Management Act (RMA) requires the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) to state the resource management issues of significance to iwi authorities in Northland. These issues were determined by a combination of an iwi-led project to identify significant issues, feedback received during consultation and a review of iwi and hapū management plans.

The following matters are relevant in considering these identified issues:

Participation in decision-making
Tangata whenua have consistently expressed (through iwi and hapū management plans, submissions on RMA planning documents and resource consents) their desire for a real, recognised, and active role in the ongoing management of natural and physical resources in Te Tai Tokerau.

During the development of the first generation RPS, tangata whenua formed a collective called Te Kotahitanga o Te Tai Tokerau to provide active participation into that process. While it was anticipated that this collective would provide ongoing input from tangata whenua into the management of natural and physical resources, unfortunately this did not occur.

Since the enactment of the RMA in 1991, tangata whenua involvement in related decision-making for the region has largely been limited to providing feedback through submissions on planning documents and resource consents. Tangata whenua consider this level of involvement to be inadequate and that it does not meet the regional and district councils' obligations under the RMA.

The RMA requires the regional council, when exercising its functions and powers, to:

- Section 6(e) – *… "recognise and provide for the following matters of national importance: the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites wāhi tapu, and other taonga."*

- Section 7(a) – *... "have particular regard to – kaitiakitanga"*
  RMA definition of kaitiakitanga – *"means the exercise of guardianship by tangata whenua of an area in accordance with tikanga Māori in relation to natural and physical resources; and includes the ethic of stewardship."*

- Section 8 – *"In achieving the purpose of the Act, all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources, shall take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi)."*

The RMA envisages the direct involvement of iwi authorities in managing natural and physical resources by providing for the transfer of regional and district council functions, powers and duties (section 33) and establishing joint management agreements (section 36(b)). While these mechanisms can improve the efficient and effective integrated management of natural and physical resources, no such transfers or joint management plans have yet occurred in Northland. The use of these provisions across the country is very limited.

The development of the new RPS provides an opportunity for the regional council and tangata whenua to build on, and improve, existing relationships.

Māori land and returned Treaty settlement assets

Tangata whenua consider the RMA provides for the exercise of kaitiakitanga (guardianship/stewardship), through the ability to manage and care for their lands, resources, wāhi tapu and other taonga using Mātauranga Māori and tikanga, and that the regional and district councils should be doing more to enable it to occur.

Māori land administration issues have led to under-development of that land. This lack of development has meant that Māori land is often highly valued by the wider community for its indigenous biodiversity, landscape, or amenity values, which may consequently further restrict development by tangata whenua. While the reasons for a lack of development on Māori land and returned Treaty settlement assets are complex, and many of the issues and solutions are outside the scope of the RPS, there are opportunities within the RMA framework to assist tangata whenua to realise the social, cultural and economic potential of their land.

The Māori Land Court has the responsibility to ensure the retention of Māori land (in Māori ownership) as set out in Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993. Māori land is defined by this Act as Māori customary land, Māori freehold land, general land owned by Māori, Crown land and Crown land reserved for Māori.

The Māori Land Court is required to administer Māori land "*in a manner that facilitates and promotes the retention, use, development and control of Māori land as taonga tuku iho by Māori owners, their whanau, their hapū, and their descendants*."[4]

However, the additional requirements of Te Ture Whenua Māori Act can affect the development of Māori land.

[4] Section 2(2), Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993

As part of the Government's "Reducing Inequalities" initiative, Te Puni Kōkiri prepared a series of papers for submission to Cabinet[5]. These papers identified six main barriers to the development of Māori land that do not apply to the development of general land.

- Multiple ownership. This can lead to problems with obtaining agreement about land use and development, and also reduces the economic return to individual owners.

- Governance and management issues. While appropriate management structures for the administration of Māori land may exist, there is a lack of expertise to plan and make decisions about administration.

- Access to information. Data on the current use of Māori land is not comprehensive, and it is costly to obtain information on potential use of Māori Land.

- Access to finance. Multiple ownership of land makes it difficult to use land as security when seeking finance for land development.

- Access to land. A large proportion of Māori land is landlocked, reducing the options available for its use and / or lease.

- Rating of Māori land. Some councils are more determined than others to collect rates on Māori Land. In cases of arrears, some councils have tried to sell the land or place charging orders on the land to recover outstanding rates.

An example of how district level RMA planning can help enable tangata whenua to develop their land includes the Whāngārei District Council's Papa kāinga Housing plan change. This plan change seeks to take into account the limitations tangata whenua have when developing their land and to better align district plan provisions with the process tangata whenua have to go through with the Māori Land Court.

While there have only been two Treaty settlements to date, current Crown policy is to settle all outstanding historical claims by 2014. There are a significant number of Treaty settlement claims within Te Tai Tokerau and the compensation packages associated with such settlement are expected to return substantial assets, as well as further obligations (including under the RMA) on regional and district councils. For example, settlement of Treaty fisheries claims has resulted in increasing tangata whenua control of and benefits from the management of the fisheries resource.

It is anticipated that the majority of assets will be returned as either cultural or commercial redress and it is important that the regional and district councils are able to support and enable tangata whenua to realise the full intent of the settlement legislation and provide for their social, cultural and economic wellbeing. It is therefore important to ensure that returned land is appropriate for the intended redress (for example, if the land is returned for commercial redress the land should be suitable for commercial activities).

Land returned through Treaty settlements is different to multiply-owned Māori land managed by the Māori Land Court (under Te Ture Whenua Māori Act). While

[5] Māori Land Administration: Client Service Performance of the Māori Land Court Unit and the Māori Trustee", Report of the Controller and Auditor-General, The Audit Office, 2004.

returned land is generally returned as general title, and not subject to the Māori Land Court and Te Ture Whenua Māori Act, additional restrictions may be put in place during the Treaty settlement process. These can include covenants (to protect significant areas), easements for public access, and other development restrictions. These restrictions have the potential to duplicate existing restrictions within regional and district plans and may require tangata whenua to go through an additional RMA process (and cost) before being able to develop their land.

The Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 provides for the full and final settlement of contemporary Māori claims to commercial aquaculture. Under the Act, the Crown is responsible for delivering the settlement. Settlement may include iwi recognised in the Māori Fisheries Act 2004 being assigned areas where they alone have the right to apply for resource consents for aquaculture. The resource consent process can be high risk and costly, particularly if there are significant regulatory constraints. This can deter Māori from developing new marine farms, and the equivalent cash settlement option may be preferred.

Mātauranga Māori

Use of Mātauranga Māori provides a key opportunity for tangata whenua to participate in the management of natural and physical resources in Te Tai Tokerau. In the context of the regional and district councils exercising their functions and powers under the RMA, this may practically involve, for example, the use of cultural indicators and marae-based monitoring.

Mātauranga Māori can also add value to resource management. For example, the timescales of the information / knowledge and management horizons is generally over a lot longer timeframe than 'mainstream' empirical based data and management horizons.

The inclusion of Māori concepts, values and processes

The main reason why the inclusion of Māori concepts, values and processes is frequently limited and ineffective is the absence of accepted and / or agreed methodologies to integrate kaitiakitanga into RMA processes. For example, there are no agreed methodologies for determining cultural landscapes.

For councils, other constraints include finance and lack of institutional capacity or understanding. For tangata whenua, other constraints can include iwi and hapū capacity, and the need for time for appropriate internal iwi consultation.

2.6 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – natural and physical resources

The following issues have been identified by iwi authorities as regionally significant as they relate to the state of, and pressures on, natural and physical resources:

(a) The decline of the mauri of natural resources (in particular water and land). (See also Issue 2.1 – Fresh and coastal water);

(b) The decline of mahinga kai, particularly kai moana harvesting sites, is impacting on the ability of tangata whenua to feed their whanau and manaaki manuhiri. (See also Issue 2.1 – Fresh and coastal water);

(c) Some tangata whenua in rural areas are drinking untreated water from streams and rivers. (See also Issue 2.1 – Fresh and coastal water);

(d) Land use and development can lead to damage, destruction and loss of access to wāhi tapu, sites of customary value and other ancestral sites and taonga which Māori have a special relationship with. (See also Issue 2.8 – Significant natural areas, features / landscapes and historic heritage);

(e) The loss of indigenous biodiversity, particularly where it negatively impacts on the ability of tangata whenua to carry out cultural and traditional activities. (See also Issue 2.2 – Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity);

(f) The impacts of climate change. (See also Issue 2.7 – Natural hazards); and

(g) The use of genetic engineering and the release of genetically modified organisms to the environment.

Issue 2.6 is addressed by the following objectives:

3.1 Integrated catchment management

3.2 Region-wide water

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

3.5 Economic activities

3.13 Natural hazard risk

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage

3.15 Active management

Explanation:
Section 62(1)(b) of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) requires the Regional Policy Statement to state the resource management issues of significance to iwi authorities in Northland. These issues were determined by a combination of an iwi-led project to identify significant issues, feedback received during consultation and a review of iwi and hapū management plans.

All natural resources – air, land, water and indigenous biodiversity – are taonga for tangata whenua. The protection of the relationship of tangata whenua with their taonga is included in Article II of the Treaty of Waitangi and section 6(e) of the RMA.

Māori see the natural world holistically – it is wholly inter-connected and complementary. According to this concept, Ranginui (sky father) and Papatūānuku (earth mother) – which encompass the mountains, open lands, rivers and the sea and the life therein – exist seamlessly together and not as individual resources in isolation from one another. An interdependent relationship exists between humans and the natural world. This allows people to live off the environment and use resources but at the same time requires them to ensure that they are cared for and protected. The relationship extends from ancestral beginnings and carries with it resource management knowledge (a component of Mātauranga Māori) and responsibilities that are shared by successive generations.

The following matters are relevant in considering these identified issues:

Mauri of natural resources
Mauri can be harmed by insensitive resource use. For example, the health and vitality of the sea, streams and rivers and the plants and animals they support can be threatened by activities such as discharges of pollutants; stormwater and sewage; run-off of contaminants from land; excessive water use; changing the course of water bodies, diverting water between catchments and rivers; or pests.

Mahinga kai
Tangata whenua are increasingly unable to feed their whānau and their mana is being eroded through inability to manaaki manuhiri, due to degradation of mahinga kai and kai moana harvesting sites.

Drinking water
There are a number of Māori communities that drink untreated water from rivers and streams. The water from most of these streams and rivers is unlikely to be safe for drinking according to water quality guidelines. It means that the health of Māori in these communities is at risk.

Wāhi tapu, sites of customary value and other ancestral sites and taonga
Cultural values, particularly from a Māori perspective, are strongly associated with embedded meaning and practice. Relationships include the genealogies, stories, place names, art, waiata (songs), poetry, natural resource use and histories that together create rich associations between people and places.

Tangata whenua believe there is presently a lack of guidance and consistency in approach to the management of cultural sites. Additionally, tangata whenua believe there is little incentive to protect cultural sites, along with a limited appreciation and understanding of the importance of cultural sites and landscapes amongst the general public.

Indigenous biodiversity
The traditional relationship formed through centuries of close interaction by tangata whenua with indigenous biodiversity is becoming eroded as indigenous biodiversity is lost. The richness of Māori culture is dependent on the richness of nature. Customary use of indigenous biodiversity is integral to sustaining relationships with traditional areas and maintaining matauranga Māori. For example, native species are an important source of materials for carving and weaving.

The term “customary use” describes traditional Māori use, practice, and knowledge, but has also come to include contemporary uses of biological resources by tangata whenua. Alongside traditional and customary use of biological resources, the

growing commercial interests of iwi and hapū in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, and ecotourism, all relate to the health of indigenous biodiversity.

The impacts of climate change

Tangata whenua believe climate change will impact their cultural, economic, social, and environmental wellbeing. For tangata whenua the effects of climate change have serious implications, and a lack of information or planning is a major issue.

GE / GMO management regime

The use of genetic engineering (GE) and release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to the environment is an issue of significance to tangata whenua in the region. GE / GMO is managed under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. However, to recognise this as an issue for tangata whenua and to respond to community concern, the RPS includes a policy (Policy 6.1.2) which requires a precautionary approach be taken towards activities whose effects are scientifically uncertain, unknown, or little understood but potentially significant. This precautionary approach includes GE / GMO.

2.7 Natural hazards

Natural hazards, particularly flooding and coastal erosion and inundation, have the potential to create significant risk to human life, property, community and economic wellbeing in Northland. This risk is projected to increase as a result of a changing climate.

Issue 2.7 is addressed by the following objective:

3.13 Natural hazard risk

Explanation:
Natural processes become known as natural hazards when they affect sites that people value (this may include structures and / or land). For Northland, flooding and coastal hazards (like coastal inundation and erosion) are the most significant natural hazard risks.

The potential impacts of natural hazard events range from general nuisance to creating significant damage and loss of property and, in extreme cases, loss of lives. In the last decade natural hazard events have caused millions of dollars' worth of damage to property and infrastructure (such as roads). For example, the March 2007 floods resulted in more than $12 million in insurance claims and the 2009-10 drought is estimated to have cost Northland's economy more than $330 million. Over the coming decades, the frequency and severity of flooding and coastal hazards in Northland is projected to increase as a result of a changing climate. Other hazards projected to increase as a result of a changing climate include droughts, high wind events and wild fire.

Many of Northland's developed and productive areas are in known hazard-prone places (particularly areas susceptible to flooding, tsunami or the effects of sea level rise and coastal erosion). For example, there are large areas of highly productive farmland and associated structures located on floodplains and drained wetlands (such as the Hikurangi swamp). Also, Northland has a lot of development directly adjacent to the coast which is often at risk from coastal hazards. Some development is located in high-risk hazard areas and is repeatedly damaged during hazard events. This is not sustainable for individuals or the wider community.

Natural hazard risk can be increased by allowing further built development in hazard-prone areas and undertaking activities that increase the severity of an event (such as draining wetlands or undertaking earthworks that can divert flood flow onto neighbouring properties). However, because natural hazards are not well understood (in terms of location, frequency, magnitude and consequences), risk avoidance has historically been difficult to justify, giving rise to increased risk.

One of the significant challenges is to manage existing development and the presence of infrastructure in natural hazard-prone areas.

2.8 Natural character, features / landscapes and historic heritage

Many of Northland's natural features and landscapes, natural character, and historic heritage have been compromised and remain at risk as a result of:

(a) The impacts of inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The primary activities of concern are built development, earthworks, significant water extractions / discharges to water, vegetation clearance and coastal structures;

(b) A lack of active management; and

(c) Inconsistent identification and protection.

Issue 2.8 is addressed by the following objectives:

3.1 Integrated catchment management

3.2 Region–wide water quality

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage

3.15 Active management

Explanation:
Section 6 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) states that the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and water bodies, and their margins, is a matter of national importance. Section 6 also requires the protection of natural character, outstanding natural features / landscapes and historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. These directives are reinforced through the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement in Policies 13, 15 and 17.

Northland's natural features and landscapes, natural character and historic heritage are some of our most important assets. They are a source of cultural and social identity, providing a unique 'sense of place' and a source of intrinsic public value. They can also provide tangible economic benefits and contribute to the attractiveness of this region as a place to live and visit.

Our coast is particularly valued by Northlanders, but is sensitive and at risk as this is where development pressure is typically greater. Subdivision, built development, earthworks, significant water extractions / discharges to water, vegetation clearance and coastal structures are the main activities which can degrade or compromise the values of these areas.

While regulation can provide protection from inappropriate development, active management is often required as well to protect and maintain or restore the values of these areas (for example, pest and weed control and the maintenance of heritage buildings / features).

One of the main impediments to active management is that a significant proportion of these high value natural and physical resources are on private land and therefore the costs of active management (for example, pest or erosion control, fencing bush / water bodies and maintenance of historic heritage) fall on the landowners.

A management issue is the inconsistent and ad hoc approaches to identifying these resources, which has often relied on the consent process.

The level of protection required and / or provided has also been variable and differs across councils. This can result in lengthy and often costly disputes between communities, landowners, developers and councils. There has also been very little monitoring of the changes that have occurred to these resources. To date, evidence is largely anecdotal and inferred from the number of subdivision, land use, water, discharge and coastal permits granted. However, these areas are special and should be managed and maintained (for their special values) in accordance with the RMA.

The Regional Policy Statement recognises that production land and other lawfully established activities are amongst the characteristics and qualities which make up the outstanding values of areas of that land. It is also recognised that, by their very nature, production land and other lawfully established activities change over time and that such changes may not result in the deterioration of these values.

PART 3: OBJECTIVES

This section contains the objectives**.** These are the desired outcomes and goals of the Regional Policy Statement. The objectives are as follows:

3.1 Integrated catchment management.

3.2 Region-wide water quality.

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels.

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity.

3.5 Enabling economic wellbeing.

3.6 Economic activities – reverse sensitivity and sterilisation.

3.7 Regionally significant infrastructure.

3.8 Efficient and effective infrastructure.

3.9 Security of energy supply.

3.10 Use and allocation of common resources.

3.11 Regional form.

3.12 Tangata whenua role in decision-making.

3.13 Natural hazard risk.

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage.

3.15 Active management.

3 Objectives

3.1 Integrated catchment management

Integrate the management of freshwater and the subdivision, use and development of land in catchments to enable catchment-specific objectives for fresh and associated coastal water to be met.

Objective 3.1 addresses the following issues:

2.1 Fresh and coastal water

2.2 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

2.3 Infrastructure and economic activities

2.6 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – natural and physical resources

2.8 Natural character, features / landscapes and historic heritage

Objective 3.1 is achieved by the following policies:

4.1 Integrated catchment management

4.2 Region-wide water quality management

4.3 Region-wide water quantity management

4.4 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous ecosystems and species

4.6 Managing effects on natural character, features / landscapes and heritage

4.7 Supporting management and improvement

Explanation

Catchments are the most appropriate unit for managing water. Catchment-based management involves taking into account all activities that impact on water quality and quantity and associated uses and values. It also involves developing catchment-specific solutions to water issues informed by local social, cultural, economic and environmental considerations.

Community uses and values of fresh and associated coastal waters will form the basis of catchment-specific objectives and limits.

In Northland, there are over 1,000 source-to-sea stream and river catchments ranging in size from about 3,600 square kilometres in the Kaipara Harbour catchment down to very small coastal stream catchments (less than one square kilometre), more than 100 lake catchments and numerous groundwater catchments (aquifers). Given the large number of catchments, they will be need to be prioritised and in some cases grouped for management.

The regional council has committed to a catchment-specific approach to water resource management through its programme (*Waiora Northland Water*) for implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011.

3.2 Region-wide water quality

Improve the overall quality of Northland's fresh and coastal water with a particular focus on:

(a) Reducing the overall Trophic Level Index status of the region's lakes;

(b) Increasing the overall Macroinvertebrate Community Index status of the region's rivers and streams;

(c) Reducing sedimentation rates in the region's estuaries and harbours;

(d) Improving microbiological water quality at popular contact recreation sites, recreational and cultural shellfish gathering sites, and commercial shellfish growing areas to minimise risk to human health; and

(e) Protecting the quality of registered drinking water supplies and the potable quality of other drinking water sources.

Objective 3.2 addresses the following issues:

2.1 Fresh and coastal water

2.2 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

2.6 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – natural and physical resources

2.8 Natural character, features / landscapes and historic heritage

Objective 3.2 is achieved by the following policies:

4.1 Integrated catchment management

4.2 Region-wide water quality management

4.3 Region-wide water quantity management

4.4 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous ecosystems and species

4.5 Identifying the coastal environment, natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes, and historic heritage resources

4.6 Managing effects on natural character, features / landscapes and heritage

4.7 Supporting management and improvement

Explanation:
Objective 3.2 seeks an overall improvement in the quality of Northland's fresh and coastal water. This recognises that improvement is both desired by the community and necessary for the long-term sustainable management of water resources and its associated uses and values.

Overall improvement is to be achieved through the five specific outcomes listed in the objective, which address the main contaminants of concern and the uses and values that they impact as identified in Issue 2.1.

On its own the objective does not require that water quality be improved in every water body. It will be implemented primarily through regional plans by way of objectives for fresh and coastal water quality and policies and methods to achieve them.

The Trophic Level Index (TLI) is an indicator used to assess the water quality (health) of lakes in New Zealand. The TLI is calculated using four water quality parameters: Total Nitrogen, Total Phosphorus, water clarity and algal biomass. In general, the higher the TLI score the poorer the quality of water in the lake. While the TLI

primarily assesses the ecological health of the lake it also has implications for natural character, recreational and amenity values.

The Macro-invertebrate Community Index (MCI) is an indicator used to assess the health of rivers and streams. It is based on the numbers and types of aquatic animals such as insects, worms and snails present within a water body. It provides a score that indicates water quality. Generally, an MCI score of less than 80 indicates poor water quality and a score of greater than 119 indicates excellent water quality.

Annual sedimentation rates are routinely measured in a number of Northland's estuaries and are a good measure of coastal water quality, as well as water quality in contributing catchments.

Parts (d) and (e) of the objective seek site-specific outcomes to reduce risks to human health. The sites will be identified and addressed through regional plans.

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels

Maintain flows, flow variability and water levels necessary to safeguard the life-supporting capacity, ecosystem processes, indigenous species and the associated ecosystems of freshwater.

Objective 3.3 addresses the following issues:

2.1 Fresh and coastal water

2.2 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

2.5 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – participation in resource management

2.6 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – natural and physical resources

2.8 Natural character, features / landscapes and historic heritage

Objective 3.3 is achieved by the following policies:

4.1 Integrated catchment management

4.2 Region-wide water quality management

4.3 Region-wide water quantity management

4.4 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous ecosystems and species

4.6 Managing effects on natural character, features / landscapes and heritage

4.7 Supporting management and improvement

Explanation

The objective seeks to maintain flows and flow variability in rivers and streams and water levels in lakes, wetlands and aquifers that are necessary to safeguard ecological values such as native plants, macro-invertebrates, and fish.

The objective is to be given effect through the establishment and inclusion of region-wide and catchment-specific water management objectives and environmental flow regimes in regional plans.

Determining whether different flows and levels are needed to provide for other values such as cultural, amenity, recreational and natural character values will be undertaken with the community through the establishment of catchment-specific water management objectives and flow regimes.

Generally speaking, flows and levels necessary to safeguard ecological values are likely to be similar to, or the same as, flows and water levels necessary to provide for other intrinsic values such as natural character and amenity values.

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

Safeguard Northland's ecological integrity by:

a) *Protecting areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna;*

b) *Maintaining the extent and diversity of indigenous ecosystems and habitats in the region; and*

c) *Where practicable, enhancing indigenous ecosystems and habitats, particularly where this contributes to the reduction in the overall threat status of regionally and nationally threatened species.*

Objective 3.4 addresses the following issues:

2.1 Fresh and coastal water

2.2 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

2.6 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – natural and physical resources

2.8 Natural character, features / landscapes and historic heritage

Objective 3.4 is achieved by the following policies:

4.1 Integrated catchment management

4.2 Region-wide water quality management

4.3 Region-wide water quantity management

4.4 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous ecosystems and species

4.5 Identifying the coastal environment, natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes, and historic heritage resources

4.6 Managing effects on natural character, features / landscapes and heritage

4.7 Supporting management and improvement

Explanation:
Safeguarding and enhancing the ecological integrity of indigenous ecosystems is vital for the diversity and abundance of indigenous species. It is also important if the services that indigenous ecosystems provide, such as the water purification function of wetlands, are to be maintained.

This objective seeks to at least maintain the extent and diversity of indigenous ecosystems and habitats in the region. This is to be achieved through a combination of protection and enhancement activities and processes.

Part (c) of the objective seeks an overall reduction in the threat status of threatened and at risk species. This applies to the management of activities that affect indigenous ecosystems and activities that impact on indigenous species living outside them.

In Northland, reduced indigenous biodiversity is due to both a loss of area and a loss of ecological condition. Currently the threats resulting from pest species and reduced

connectivity are considered greater than loss in overall area, although the latter is still important (for example with wetlands, very low fertility heathlands including gumlands, old growth forests, broadleaf forest, sand dunes and shrublands).

To date, voluntary efforts have been central to slowing down the decline in condition and area. Landowner and community stewardship takes many forms including the active management of pests, covenanting of significant natural areas, indigenous revegetation, habitat creation and good management practices in production environments.

However, regulation, including the use of permitted activity rules is necessary, as a backstop. Key regulatory methods to achieve the objective include the protection of significant natural areas, and controls on subdivision, use and development including discharges to water, water takes, and vegetation clearance.

Regulation should include incentives to encourage subdivision, use and development involving restoration and protection of ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity.

For safeguarding water and its ecosystems, the level of protection will be determined on a catchment-by-catchment basis, by establishing freshwater objectives and coastal water quality classifications.

3.5 Enabling economic wellbeing

Northland's natural and physical resources are sustainably managed in a way that is attractive for business and investment that will improve the economic wellbeing of Northland and its communities.

Objective 3.5 addresses the following issues:

2.1	*Fresh and coastal water*	*2.3*	*Infrastructure and economic activities*
2.6	*Issues of significance to tangata whenua – natural and physical resources*		

Objective 3.5 is achieved by the following policies:

4.1	*Integrated catchment management*	*4.3*	*Region-wide water quantity management*
4.2	*Region-wide water quality management*	*6.1*	*Efficient and effective planning*

Explanation:
The way we manage our natural and physical resources (including infrastructure), particularly through regulation, is important to the economy. It directly affects how markets, and individuals and businesses in those markets, operate and allocate their resources.

Northland has the second to lowest level of Gross Domestic Product per capita of New Zealand's 16 regions, 35% below the national average. Additionally, the Northland economy has recently been hit hard by the combined effects of the global economic recession and two significant climatic events creating a large increase in the number of unemployed people. To improve our wellbeing (especially our economic wellbeing) Northland needs to attract and retain large and small-scale investment. The dispersed nature of Northland and the geographical spread of

unemployment mean that small or medium-size investment can have significant positive impacts.

We need people and businesses to choose Northland as a place to invest, and our economic development needs to be aligned with environmental outcomes. Many economic activities rely on the character and quality of Northland's natural environment and similarly it is a major attraction for people, investors and businesses.

3.6 Economic activities – reverse sensitivity and sterilisation

The viability of land and activities important for Northland's economy is protected from the negative impacts of new subdivision, use and development, with particular emphasis on either:

- *(a) Reverse sensitivity for existing:*
  - *(i) Primary production activities;*
  - *(ii) Industrial and commercial activities;*
  - *(iii) Mining*; or*
  - *(iv) Existing and planned regionally significant infrastructure; or*
- *(b) Sterilisation of:*
  - *(i) Land with regionally significant mineral resources; or*
  - *(ii) Land which is likely to be used for regionally significant infrastructure.*

**Includes aggregates and other minerals.*

Objective 3.6 addresses the following issues:

2.3 Infrastructure and economic activities *2.4 Regional form*

Objective 3.6 is achieved by the following policies:

5.1 Regional form

Explanation:
This objective recognises there are activities and land that should be protected from the negative impacts of subdivision, use and development because of their importance to Northland's economy.

The impacts councils can manage are those that come from incompatible development and land use, primarily reverse sensitivity and sterilisation (refer to Issue 2.3 for descriptions of reverse sensitivity and sterilisation).

The establishment of any sensitive activity in close proximity to the above mentioned activities, without appropriate mitigation, has the potential to cause reverse sensitivity effects. In Northland, the activities that are most likely to give rise to these effects are residential subdivision and development.

The focus is on protecting the *viability* of land and activities important for Northland's economy. Rather than absolute protection, it allows for some minor impediment or

restriction (for example, noise or discharge restrictions) but not to the extent that it would make the use of the land or activity unviable, or would substantively interfere with the continued operation of existing lawfully established activities at current levels.

Primary production, commercial and industrial activities, mining and infrastructure have been highlighted because of their particular contribution to the economy (actual and potential) and their sensitivity to the impacts of reverse sensitivity and sterilisation.

Primary production (such as dairy farming, horticulture, forestry, aquaculture and poultry farming) is the biggest contributor to Northland's economy. For rural landowners, subdivision is a 'double-edged sword'. On the one hand it provides an opportunity for rural landowners to make money. But on the other hand, subdivision can result in reverse sensitivity issues (that is, there are more people to complain about the noise, smells and sprays from primary production activities and place pressure on councils to change the rules to limit these activities).

Mining is particularly sensitive to the impacts of residential development and the establishment of other sensitive activities. It is also very important for the regional economy. Aggregates are a critical 'ingredient' for construction (such as roads and buildings), and the main cost of aggregates is transport. The more that can be sourced locally, the cheaper it will be for new construction. There are also direct economic benefits to Northland from the mining itself, such as jobs and the consumption of local goods and services. The objective focuses on land with regionally significant mineral resources, that is, it does not include land which may have regionally significant mineral resources (but have not been identified as such).

Regionally significant infrastructure is inherently important for the regional economy. Its development is generally very costly in terms of capital and in many cases routes or sites are secured years before the infrastructure is developed. Securing alternative sites for existing regionally significant infrastructure is extremely difficult. It is important that protection is afforded to proposed infrastructure sites as well as protecting existing regionally significant infrastructure from the effects of incompatible activities. Policies 3.7(a)(iv) and (b)(ii) are intended to apply to existing and planned regionally significant infrastructure. In this instance, planned means infrastructure that has been identified and provided for in a notice of requirement, designation, consent, a regional or district plan, the Northland Regional Land Transport Strategy or a document prepared using the special consultative process under the Local Government Act 2002.

3.7 Regionally significant infrastructure

Recognise and promote the benefits of regionally significant infrastructure, (a physical resource), which through its use of natural and physical resources can significantly enhance Northland's economic, cultural, environmental and social wellbeing.

Objective 3.7 addresses the following issues:

2.3 Infrastructure and economic activities *2.4 Regional form*

	2.6 Issues of Significance to Tangata Whenua (natural and physical resources)
Objective 3.7 is achieved by the following policies:	
5.3 Regionally significant infrastructure	

Explanation:
Northland needs to provide for regionally significant infrastructure. Quality regionally significant infrastructure can attract business and investment to the region, making Northland better able to compete in the national economy, as well as helping to protect health and safety and provide other important social and community functions. Regionally significant infrastructure may however have adverse effects on the environment.

It is important therefore to set the overall integrated direction at the regional level promoting recognition of these benefits alongside the need to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects. Such a framework must however also recognise that the constraints of infrastructure provision mean that adverse effects cannot always be practicably avoided or internalised.

To ensure that the benefits of regionally significant infrastructure can be fully realised, it is also important to recognise the long-term needs of infrastructure providers to operate, maintain and enhance assets.

Recognition and promotion of the benefits of regionally significant infrastructure includes avoiding the unplanned overloading of essential infrastructure.

3.8 Efficient and effective infrastructure

Manage resource use to:

(a) Optimise the use of existing infrastructure;

(b) Ensure new infrastructure is flexible, adaptable, and resilient, and meets the reasonably foreseeable needs of the community; and

(c) Strategically enable infrastructure to lead or support regional economic development and community wellbeing.

Objective 3.8 addresses the following issues:	
2.3 Infrastructure and economic activities	*2.4 Regional form*
Objective 3.8 is achieved by the following policies:	
5.1 Regional form	*5.2 Effective and efficient infrastructure*

Explanation:
This objective recognises that upgrades to existing infrastructure and the building of new infrastructure are costly activities and resources are limited, so it is important to get the best out of existing infrastructure. This includes using demand management tools to manage the need for new infrastructure by making resource consumption more efficient.

Behaviour change through initiatives such as promoting resource efficiency in households and businesses (for example, energy efficient technology and

appliances, efficient urban design principles such as passive solar heating and improved transport options) can significantly reduce or manage demand. This has a number of benefits, for example, the efficient use of energy minimises the pressure on energy generation and distribution and reduces business and household energy costs, improves transport energy efficiency and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Additional co-benefits include improved mobility, improved health in insulated homes and increased comfort of commercial buildings.

Strategic planning for land use can also reduce demand on infrastructure such as public transport and reticulated water, as well as ensuring existing infrastructure can continue to operate efficiently by avoiding effects from incompatible activities. Where new or upgraded infrastructure is proposed, opportunities to use sustainable materials and practices should be explored.

Infrastructure should, as a principle, have sufficient flexibility, adaptability and resilience to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of the future. Part of this objective therefore seeks to help future-proof infrastructure for long-term use and ensure it can more efficiently adapt to changing technological, operational, economic, environmental and social conditions.

Infrastructure can also be an important tool in promoting economic development and community wellbeing. Part of maximising the value of infrastructure and ensuring its effectiveness is planning for the right infrastructure in the right place at the right time. This objective aims to ensure that planning for infrastructure is targeted to areas and sectors where it will have the most impact.

Population projections, environmental monitoring trends, anticipated economic development and social indicators (like social deprivation and access to drinking water) could be used to develop critical thresholds for ensuring infrastructure adequately meets the reasonably foreseeable needs of the community. By following this approach, the objective aims to improve the overall affordability and effectiveness of infrastructure.

There is also a need to integrate strategic infrastructure planning between Northland and other regions, including Auckland. To this end, infrastructure can often be used to achieve multiple outcomes. For example:

- A well-functioning and effective transport system can improve business efficiency, innovation, competition and trade, support concentrations of economic activities and facilitate a mobile and flexible work force.

- An effective broadband fibre network can provide economic benefits through new and innovative ways of doing business, access to new markets, improving communication and enhancing access to information and educational opportunities.

- A well-coordinated water storage system and reticulation network can provide water for multiple purposes including domestic and municipal supply, irrigation and the needs of industry.

3.9 Security of energy supply

Northland's energy supplies are secure and reliable, and generation that benefits the region is supported, particularly when it uses renewable sources.

Objective 3.9 addresses the following issue:

2.3 Infrastructure and economic activities

Objective 3.9 is achieved by the following policies:

5.1 Regional form
5.3 Regionally significant infrastructure
5.4 Renewable energy

Explanation:
Northland's relatively low rate of generation, coupled with the vulnerability of energy supply through Auckland and the network within Northland, is detrimental to the social and economic wellbeing of the region. For example, Northland has a number of industries that rely on a secure supply of energy such as the Marsden Point oil refinery, primary production activities such as dairying and horticulture and other industrial and commercial activities, including manufacturing and processing. Diverse sources of energy generation in Northland will give the region security and provide economic, social and environmental benefits. The region also needs to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels by promoting the development of renewable energy sources.

Renewable electricity generation is a national priority and the government has set a target to produce 90% of our electricity needs from renewable sources by 2025. The Government has produced a National Policy Statement on Renewable Electricity Generation to promote and guide the development of renewable electricity generation. This objective seeks in part to give effect to this National Policy Statement.

A robust transmission grid and distribution network is essential to fully realise the benefits of increased energy generation within the region and between Northland and the rest of the country. To support a robust transmission grid and distribution network, Regional Policy Statement and plan provisions should enable the ongoing use, maintenance and development of electricity infrastructure as well as avoiding adverse effects from incompatible activities.

Small and community-scale renewable electricity generation can provide security and resilience as well as reducing pressure on the national grid and regional distribution network.

There is also the potential in the region to use renewable energy sources (for example, from biomass and geothermal resources) to generate heat and reduce demand on traditional electricity generation sources. The Government has a target to significantly increase the amount of energy per year of energy from woody biomass or direct use geothermal additional to that used in 2005.

Although we must reduce our reliance on them, secure sources of non-renewable energy such as oil and gas will be needed to support key industries in Northland for the foreseeable future. To this end, key oil and gas pipelines in Northland along with

the Marsden Point Oil Refinery should be recognised as being regionally significant infrastructure.

3.10 Use and allocation of common resources

Efficiently use and allocate common natural resources, with a particular focus on:

(a) Situations where demand is greater than supply;

(b) The use of freshwater and coastal water space; and

(c) Maximising the security and reliability of supply of common natural resources for users.

Objective 3.10 addresses the following issues:	
2.1 Fresh and coastal water	*2.3 Infrastructure and economic activities*
Objective 3.10 is achieved by the following policies:	
4.1 Integrated catchment management	*4.3 Region-wide water quantity management*
4.2 Region-wide water quality management	*4.8 Efficient use of coastal water space*

Explanation:
Common resources are critical to Northland's economy. To ensure maximum benefit is gained from available resources, it is vital that they are allocated and used efficiently.

At present there is no charge for the right to use common resources, the right to use[6] them is allocated on a 'first in, first served' basis and in some cases, there is minimal obligation to demonstrate reasonable use. As a consequence there is little incentive for users to minimise wastage or use only as much as they really need. Where the demand or pressure on a resource is low, this isn't generally a problem. However, it can be a significant problem where demand outstrips supply.

Freshwater and coastal water space, for example, are resources that are under significant pressure in certain areas and in some cases demand is known to be exceeding supply.

Efficient use may involve[7]:

(a) Avoiding wastage;
(b) Using the most efficient available technology;
(c) Linking use with availability (for example, water extraction increases during high flows and decreases with low flows);
(d) Reducing the need for a resource (for example, encouraging water storage to lessen demand for water extraction); and
(e) Reusing resources (for example using treated waste and process water for irrigation).

[6] While there are monitoring and administrative costs associated with 'rights' (for example, consents), there is no cost for the lease / rental / privilege of using common resources.
[7] Adapted from the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011: Implementation Guide.

Efficient allocation may involve:

(a) Ensuring the processes to allocate the resource are efficient, by selecting the optimal mechanism for the circumstance (the optimal mechanism will vary depending on the circumstances; in some instances it might be peer-led allocation, such as water sharing groups, while in other instances it might be purely random allocation, such as a ballot);
(b) Allocating scarce resources to the highest value uses, taking into account fairness and equity, recognising the difficulty of valuing some uses, and that values can change over time;
(c) Providing an appropriate balance between providing users certainty of allocation over time, the community retaining the ability to adjust allocations to improve outcomes and allowing new users to have an opportunity to gain an allocation where the resource is already fully allocated;
(d) Ensuring efficient use (for example, through enforcement or incentives);
(e) Taking into account environmental, economic, social and cultural interests, and how these may change over time; and
(f) Providing an allocation where the rights and responsibilities of the user are clearly defined.

"Demand and supply" is used in this objective to refer to the situation where there is a limited resource and the demand is in excess of the limited resource.

3.11 Regional form

Northland has sustainable built environments that effectively integrate infrastructure with subdivision, use and development, and have a sense of place, identity and a range of lifestyle, employment and transport choices.

Objective 3.11 addresses the following issues:			
2.3	*Infrastructure and economic activities*	*2.4*	*Regional form*
Objective 3.11 is achieved by the following policies:			
5.1	*Regional form*	*5.2*	*Effective and efficient infrastructure*

Explanation:
Well planned, coordinated development and good urban design can lead to higher levels of amenity, lower infrastructure costs and greater community wellbeing.

Under section 30 of the Resource Management Act (RMA), the regional council must achieve the strategic integration of infrastructure with land use. Under section 7 of the RMA, councils are required to have particular regard to maintaining and enhancing amenity values and maintaining and enhancing the quality of the environment (this includes all natural and physical resources).

Good urban and infrastructure design and well planned, coordinated development throughout the region can lead to higher levels of amenity, lower infrastructure costs and greater community wellbeing.

This objective seeks to achieve a regional form that enhances the quality of life for Northland's residents by creating sustainable communities that have:

- Good physical connections;
- An adequate range of transport choices (including public transport in urban areas); and
- Vibrant, safe and cohesive town centres with a range of residential and business opportunities.

Developing sustainable built environments means consolidating new urban development[8] within and adjacent to existing settlements.

There are significant opportunities that arise through consolidated development including:

- Avoiding unplanned 'overloading' of essential infrastructure;
- Improved energy efficiency through the integration of land-use and infrastructure;
- Creating opportunities for residents to work within close proximity to their homes;
- Protecting areas of high natural character and sensitive landscapes; and
- Promoting the ongoing viability of existing town centres by creating a sense of place and identity with sufficient levels of services.

It is acknowledged that rural settings are largely made up of businesses (including but not limited to primary production and their support industries). The objective seeks development that is compatible with surrounding uses and values, is served by an appropriate level of infrastructure and is appropriate within the context of the surrounding environment.

3.12 Tangata whenua role in decision-making

Tangata whenua kaitiaki role is recognised and provided for in decision-making over natural and physical resources.

Objective 3.12 addresses the following issues:

2.5 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – participation in resource management

Objective 3.12 is achieved by the following policies:

8.1 Participation in decision-making, plans, consents and monitoring

8.2 Iwi and hapū management plans

8.3 Māori land and returned Treaty settlement assets

Explanation:
Tangata whenua are the kaitiaki of their traditional taonga, while the regional and district councils have delegated authority from the Crown to manage Northland's natural and physical resources.

In keeping with the partnership principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the Resource Management Act 1991 (sections 6(e), 7(a) and 8), the regional and district councils

[8] For the purpose of Objective 3.11 'urban development' means development intended for mixed-use, commercial, industrial activities and all development where the primary purpose is residential use, except where it is ancillary to a lawfully established rural activity.

must provide for tangata whenua involvement in resource management, particularly where it affects their taonga.

Tangata whenua involvement in resource management can also add value to resource management. For example, it can help to build relationships, provide different sources of information and knowledge, and provide a longer term perspective of resource management.

3.13 Natural hazard risk

The risks and impacts of natural hazard events (including the influence of climate change) on people, communities, property, natural systems, infrastructure and our regional economy are minimised by:

(a) Increasing our understanding of natural hazards, including the potential influence of climate change on natural hazard events;

(b) Becoming better prepared for the consequences of natural hazard events;

(c) Avoiding inappropriate new development in 10 and 100 year flood hazard areas and coastal hazard areas;

(d) Not compromising the effectiveness of existing defences (natural and man-made);

(e) Enabling appropriate hazard mitigation measures to be created to protect existing vulnerable development; and

(f) Promoting long-term strategies that reduce the risk of natural hazards impacting on people and communities.

(g) Recognising that in justified circumstances, critical infrastructure may have to be located in natural hazard-prone areas.

Objective 3.13 addresses the following issues:

2.6 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – natural and physical resources *2.7 Natural hazards*

Objective 3.13 is achieved by the following policies:

7.1 Development in natural hazard-prone areas *7.2 General risk reduction policies*

Explanation:
Under the RMA, people must be able to provide for their social and economic wellbeing; however, this needs to be balanced against the risk to people, property and infrastructure from natural hazard events. This objective seeks to minimise the risks and impacts of natural hazard events by, amongst other things, not compromising the effectiveness of existing defences (natural and man-made) and avoiding inappropriate development in hazard-prone areas.

There is an increasing amount of information that shows which areas in Northland are prone to damage from natural hazards and this enables informed assessments about the risk to people and property from natural hazards. Part (a) of this objective seeks to further increase our understanding of natural hazards (for example, by identifying and mapping new flood and coastal hazard areas). This work will be ongoing and is integral to minimising the risks and impacts of natural hazard events.

There is existing development within hazard-prone areas and enabling appropriate hazard mitigation measures to be created will help minimise the risks and impacts on these vulnerable communities.

Risk reduction is often less costly than the social and economic impact of the physical damage and potential loss of life caused by natural hazards.

Risk reduction measures may include:

(a) Encouraging a change in land use to less vulnerable activities;
(b) Considering the benefits of managed retreat, particularly where the costs of protection works exceed the benefits (primarily as a response to coastal erosion but also relevant to properties that are repeatedly inundated by floods);
(c) Enhancing natural or artificial protection measures (for example, dunes and stopbanks);
(d) Increasing river channel capacity to reduce flood risk; and
(e) Not developing hazard-prone areas.

Climate change is explicitly included within this objective because under section 7 of the RMA, councils must have particular regard to the effects of a changing climate on their communities. Climate change is projected to have a significant impact on the risk from natural hazards by changing some of the hazard drivers (for example, sea level rise may lead to greater coastal erosion / inundation and an increase in high intensity short duration rainfall events could lead to more flash floods and land slips).

While there is some uncertainty over the possibility, extent and timing of climate change effects, when assessing natural hazard risk, councils should use the latest national guidance and the best available information on the impacts of climate change on natural hazard events. The Ministry for the Environment's latest set of national guidelines on climate change is already being used for planning purposes in Northland (for example, the projections for sea level rise and storm rainfall increase are reflected in the tsunami and flood modelling undertaken by the regional council). These guidelines have been accepted as a prudent approach to risk assessment in recent court cases because the future state of the environment is relevant in considering the effects of a proposal.

This objective seeks to ensure that risk posed by natural hazard events does not increase as a result of human activity. Certain human activities can increase the risk associated with natural hazards, particularly where those activities modify, reduce, remove or otherwise compromise existing defences against hazards such as dune systems, coastal vegetation, wetlands, flood plains and estuaries.

Activities that could compromise the effectiveness of existing defences include infilling of flood plains resulting from earthworks (this reduces the volume available to attenuate flood flows), raising roads and highways, vegetation clearance or the creation of impermeable surfaces (this leads to increased run-off) and the diversion of floodwater associated with structures erected on overland flow paths or in high velocity areas of flood plains.

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage

Identify and protect from inappropriate subdivision, use and development;

(a) The qualities and characteristics that make up the natural character of the coastal environment, and the natural character of freshwater bodies and their margins;

(b) The qualities and characteristics that make up outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes;

(c) The integrity of historic heritage.

Objective 3.14 addresses the following issues:

2.1 Fresh and coastal water

2.2 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

2.6 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – natural and physical resources

2.8 Natural character, features / landscapes and historic heritage

Objective 3.14 is achieved by the following policies:

4.1 Integrated catchment management

4.2 Region-wide water quality managemen

4.3 Region-wide water quantity management.

4.4 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous ecosystems and species

4.5 Identifying the coastal environment, natural character, outstanding natural features, oustanding natural landscapes, and historic heritage resources

4.6 Managing effects on natural character, features / landscapes and heritage

4.7 Supporting management and improvement

Explanation:
The objective identifies matters that are central to the sustainability objectives of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Regional and district councils must recognise and provide for the protection of these resources from inappropriate subdivision, use and development as a matter of national importance under sections 6(a), (b) and (f) of the RMA. The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) reinforces these duties and requires regional policy statements and plans to identify where this protection is needed.

The objective does not seek absolute protection in all cases, as in many circumstances individual elements of these resources (for example, a specific landscape unit) can accommodate a degree of modification. The level of protection will depend on the values if these areas.

Legal obligations aside, these resources are very important for Northland's unique character and sense of place and they contribute to our social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

To protect these areas, they must first be identified and then managed.

Using a regionally-consistent approach to identify and protect the areas listed in the objective will:

- Provide certainty that the requirements of the RMA and NZCPS are being met throughout the region;

- Provide certainty that the values which contribute to Northland's unique sense of place are protected to a defined standard and that the activities which are of most concern are addressed;
- Limit the duplication and associated costs and inefficiencies which arise when individual councils address these matters in isolation;
- Avoid the potential for conflicting provisions across council boundaries;
- Provide the basis for community-wide agreement on what is regionally significant in relation to those matters listed in the objective; and
- Provide certainty for landowners and developers as to where these areas are.

For the purposes of the Regional Policy Statement, historic heritage is as defined in s2, RMA.

3.15 Active management

Maintain and / or improve;

(a) The natural character of the coastal environment and fresh water bodies and their margins;

(b) Outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes;

(c) Historic heritage;

(d) Areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna (including those within estuaries and harbours);

(e) Public access to the coast; and

(f) Fresh and coastal water quality

by supporting, enabling and positively recognising active management arising from the efforts of landowners, individuals, iwi, hapū and community groups.

Objective 3.15 addresses the following issues:

2.1 Fresh and coastal water

2.2 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

2.5 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – participation in resource management

2.6 Issues of significance to tangata whenua – natural and physical resources

2.8 Natural character, features / landscapes and historic heritage

Objective 3.15 is achieved by the following policies:

4.2 Region-wide water quality management

4.3 Region-wide water quantity management

4.4 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous ecosystems and species

4.7 Supporting management and improvement

Explanation:
The objective identifies elements of Northland's environment that have been identified in other objectives as being fundamental to the region's unique character, and / or the most vulnerable to the effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development. They tend be those natural and physical resources valued most by communities and / or given particular weight under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). These elements therefore require special attention and the RMA provides for controls over the use of land (through district and regional plan rules) to manage impacts on them.

Rules can be effective in protecting these resources from the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development. However, rules are less effective for remedying or preventing other adverse effects not associated with development, such as those from pest plants and animals. The management of these effects is often best done through the work of individuals and communities.

For example, Northland is particularly susceptible to ongoing pressures and risks that cannot realistically be remedied through rules. These include:

- Impacts of pest organisms;
- "Legacy effects" resulting from reduced extent of riparian vegetation and wetlands and subsequently elevated sediment and nutrient loads;
- Reduced diversity / extent of native habitat;
- Limited public access to and along the coast in some areas; and
- Costs to maintain, manage and / or restore historic heritage.

These effects (on their own and in combination) reduce natural character, indigenous biodiversity, water quality, and aesthetic and amenity values and without intervention, may continue to degrade the quality of Northland's environment.

Appropriate subdivision, use and development can be the most effective means to achieve on-going management and improvement of these resources and can provide opportunities to address ongoing impacts / risks and result in net positive effects that may not otherwise occur. Landowners and community groups are generally best placed to undertake active management because:

- Councils have limited resources and do not have the capacity for the day-to-day on-site management that is often required, particularly for managing pest plants and animals;

- While rules may go some way to maintaining special areas, maintenance enhancement cannot be compelled by rules and relies on motivated people;
- Landowners have the ability to make decisions on how to use their land;
- Landowners, iwi, hapū and communities are better placed to use local knowledge, networks and resources; and
- Communities and iwi, hapū have a better idea of what they want and / or need regarding the matters listed.

Another issue is that landowners (particularly rural landowners) are often faced with the costs of active protection and / or enhancement of these areas on their land for what is in effect the wider public benefit and in these cases support / recognition is warranted.

Therefore, the objective does not seek to 'compensate' landowners where land use restrictions apply; rather, the intention is to assist those who wish to actively manage and / or enhance aspects of the environment over and above the requirements of the RMA. The use of public resources (like rates, council staff time) and incentives to assist and encourage individuals and community groups can be justified where:

- It helps councils to achieve their functions and duties under the RMA; and
- The social, cultural, economic or environmental benefits for the public are greater than the costs of the public investment.

PARTS 4 – 8: POLICIES AND METHODS

This section contains the policies and methods, grouped as follows:

- Land, water and common resources
- Regional form and infrastructure
- Supporting economic development
- Natural hazards
- Tangata whenua

4 Policies and methods - Water, land and common resources

4.1 Integrated catchment management

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 4.1 are:

3.1 Integrated catchment management

3.2 Region-wide water quality

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

3.10 Use and allocation of common resources

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage

4.1.1 Policy – Catchment-specific objectives and limits

Collaboratively:

(a) Identify the values of water in catchments and receiving estuaries and harbours;

(b) Provide for these values by establishing catchment-specific objectives and set water quality limits and environmental flows and / or levels, and where necessary targets; and

(c) Establish methods to avoid, and where necessary phase out, over-allocation.

Explanation:
Establishing water management objectives is usually best done at a catchment-scale because catchments vary in their geology, soils, hydrology, ecology, land uses and development.

Of particular importance is the need to integrate the management of fresh and coastal water. This is because almost all of Northland's major catchments drain to, and influence the quality of water and associated uses and values in estuaries and harbours. Uses and values include habitats important for recreational, cultural and commercial fishing, amenity values and indigenous biological diversity.

Catchment-specific objectives and limits provide the basis for regulatory controls on discharges, the use of land and on the taking of water to prevent over-allocation. They also guide voluntary management efforts such as industry good practice and community restoration and enhancement initiatives. Environmental flows in rivers and streams need to include both a minimum flow to sustain life-supporting capacity and other values, and provision for flow variability to trigger other physical and ecological processes, including fish migration.

Collaboration is central to the success of catchment management. Having a diversity of stakeholders represented and working together from the start of catchment planning will strengthen the end result by increasing mutual understanding of the water-related issues and a commitment to the solutions.

4.1.2 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) The regional council will:

(a) Prioritise catchments and determine timeframes for establishing catchment-specific objectives and setting water quality limits and environmental flows and water levels through its programme for implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

(b) Establish catchment specific objectives and set water quality limits and environmental flows and / or levels and include them in the relevant regional plan by a staged approach.

(c) Review and where necessary revise coastal water quality classifications and standards in the relevant regional plan for waters within the upper Whāngārei Harbour and the inner Bay of Islands to ensure consistency with their catchment-specific objectives and water quality limits.

(2) In establishing catchment-specific objectives and setting water quality limits and environmental flows and levels and targets, the regional council will collaborate with catchment communities, iwi and hapū, key stakeholders and other councils to:

(a) Identify values and interests in fresh and coastal waters, and their associated ecosystems, in catchments;

(b) Develop options for catchment-specific objectives, and water quality limits and environmental flows and levels, and targets.

(c) Assess the likely impacts of each option on environmental, economic, social and cultural well-being;

(d) Select the preferred options;

(3) The regional council will collaborate with catchment communities, iwi and hapū, key stakeholders and other councils to assess and determine the most effective and efficient mix of regulatory and non-regulatory methods for achieving catchment-specific objectives.

(4) The regional council will include regulatory methods in regional plans to avoid or phase out over-allocation.

(5) The regional council will develop non-statutory implementation plans or strategies to coordinate responsibilities, timing, and costs (including council annual and long-term funding requirements) for implementing methods to achieve catchment-specific objectives, limits and targets.

(6) The regional council will review the ongoing appropriateness of, and where necessary revise, catchment-specific objectives, water quality limits and environmental flows and levels, targets, and methods for achieving them.

Explanation:
The regional council has prioritised Northland's catchments for the establishment of catchment-specific objectives and limits through *Waiora Northland Water,* its programme for implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM). It will also identify outstanding freshwater bodies that will be protected as required by the NPSFM. This will involve using expert and local knowledge. The programme will be regularly reviewed and where necessary priorities and timeframes for plan changes will be revised.

Coastal water quality classifications and standards are used for managing direct discharges to coastal waters. They do not apply to direct or diffuse discharges in contributing catchments. It is not effective or efficient to have coastal water quality classifications for harbour waters when they are unlikely to be achieved due to contaminants in freshwater inputs. Method 4.1.2(1)(c) recognises that coastal water quality classifications for the upper Whāngārei Harbour and the inner Bay of Islands may need to be amended to ensure that they are consistent with specific objectives and water quality limits for their contributing catchments.

Method 4.1.2(2) sets out the regional council's commitment to a collaborative approach for establishing water management objectives and limits. The approach is necessary to ensure that local issues and knowledge are taken into account and that there is strong community buy-in and consensus prior to regional plan change processes. This includes working closely with existing catchment stakeholder groups such as the Integrated Kaipara Harbour Management Group. The regional council will also work closely with Auckland Council in regard to the Kaipara Harbour and its sub-catchments.

It is important to note that all freshwater objectives and limits (catchment-specific or region-wide) must sustain the life-supporting capacity of water as required to give effect to the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and the objectives of the NPSFM. The exact level of protection (high, medium, or low) will be determined with local communities through collaborative processes.

Method 4.1.2(3) recognises that there are a number of different methods to achieve water objectives. For example, regional plan controls on discharges, land uses and water extraction. However, objectives can also be achieved by way of non-regulatory methods, such as industry and sector good management practices, funding and education. Integrated catchment management requires selecting the most appropriate mix of methods taking into account their effectiveness and efficiency.

Methods for managing water quality and quantity to meet limits are likely to be determined at the same time as objectives and limits are established. Determining the mix of methods with the community provides not only an opportunity for better coordination of activities, and increased buy-in, but it is also an opportunity for the identification of funding activities. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 include direction on some important management methods for improving the overall quality of the region's water and efficient allocation and use of water. These methods are also expected to be important management tools in priority catchments.

Method 4.1.2(4) recognises that regulatory methods will be required to ensure that catchment-specific limits are not exceeded, such as controls on nutrient or sediment loads for example. The NPSFM states that over-allocation must be avoided or phased out.

Method 4.1.2(5) identifies non-statutory implementation plans or strategies and important tools for coordinating catchment planning, particularly non-regulatory methods. They are also useful for informing council annual and long-term budgets.

Method 4.1.2(6) recognises that over time catchment management objectives may need to be refined in light of up-to-date information.

4.1.3 Method – Monitoring and information gathering

The regional council will obtain information necessary for establishing and reviewing progress towards achieving catchment-specific objectives, water quality limits and environmental flows and levels, and targets. This includes information on:

(a) Relationships between freshwater bodies and coastal waters and their associated ecosystems;

(b) Relationships between surface and ground water;

(c) Relationships between environmental flows and levels and water quality;

(d) Seasonal hydrological patterns;

(e) Aquatic ecological values;

(f) Existing levels of extraction and discharges;

(g) Land use and development trends and the associated demand for water resource and assimilative capacity for contaminants;

(h) Climate change predictions and likely impacts on water quality and environmental flows and levels;

(i) Social and cultural knowledge, including Mautauranga Māori;

(j) Sources and temporal and spatial loads of sediments, nutrients, and faecal pathogens;

(k) Sedimentation rates in estuaries and harbours; and

(l) Economic considerations.

Explanation:
Good information is necessary for effective and efficient catchment planning. It is needed to inform the establishment of water objectives by describing water dependent uses and values; for understanding the nature and sources of contaminants and water extraction; for identifying relationships between water quality and quantity and uses and values; for setting water quality and quantity limits; and for monitoring progress towards meeting limits and achieving objectives. Good information is also necessary for prioritising restoration and enhancement initiatives. Method 4.1.3 identifies many of the important information needs. However, the regional council recognises that exact needs will vary catchment by catchment.

4.1.4 Method – Advocacy and education

(1) The regional council will:

(a) Educate resource users about catchment-specific objectives and water quality limits and environmental flows and / or levels.

(b) Report to the community on progress towards meeting limits and achieving catchment-specific objectives.

Explanation:
Method 4.1.4(1)(a) recognises that it is important for resource users to understand freshwater objectives and freshwater quality limits and environmental flows and levels so that they can make informed management and investment decisions.

Method 4.1.4(1)(b) states that the regional council will report on water quality and quantity and the effectiveness of regulatory and non-regulatory methods. This is also important for resource users because many of them would have invested time and money in the catchment planning and they will want to know if it is making a difference. However, it can take a long time to see improvements in water quality as contaminants such as sediment and nutrients often only slowly leave catchment systems. Ecosystems also respond to restoration efforts at different rates.

4.2 Region-wide water quality management

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 4.2 are:

3.1 Integrated catchment management

3.2 Region-wide water quality

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

3.10 Use and allocation of common resources

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage

3.15 Active management

4.2.1 Policy - Improving overall water quality

Improve the overall quality of Northland's water resources by:

(a) Establishing freshwater objectives and setting region-wide water quality limits in regional plans that give effect to Objective 3.2 of this regional policy statement.

(b) Reducing loads of sediment, nutrients, and faecal matter to water from the use and development of land and from poorly treated and untreated discharges of wastewater; and

(c) Promoting and supporting the active management, enhancement and creation of vegetated riparian margins and wetlands.

Explanation:
There is a need to better prevent and control diffuse source discharges, run-off and leaching from the use and development of land so that the overall quality of the region's fresh and coastal waters is improved. In addition, it is important that there is continued investment in addressing discharges of wastewater, particularly from municipal systems. Reducing loads of the sediments, nutrients, and faecal matter will be central to meeting catchment-specific objectives and limits.

There are also potential efficiencies to be realised in terms of water quality. Capacity for additional discharges as part of further land use intensification may only be possible if existing contaminant loads are reduced.

Riparian vegetation and wetlands play an important role in maintaining and improving water quality by trapping and treating sediments and nutrients, improving dissolved oxygen concentrations and reducing temperatures through shading, and providing important habitat for aquatic species.

4.2.2 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) The regional council will amend its regional plans to the extent required to implement Policy 4.1.1 and Policy 4.2.1, including by:

(a) Establishing freshwater objectives and region-wide water quality limits;

(b) Methods to avoid or phase out over-allocation;

(c) Where appropriate, requiring the restriction or exclusion of livestock from the coastal marine area, beds and margins of streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands;

(d) *Encouraging livestock exclusion in all other areas;*

(e) *Managing the effects of nutrient loss and sediment discharges*

(f) *Incentivising and where necessary requiring other good management practices to prevent and control diffuse source contaminants entering water bodies;*

(g) *Providing for appropriate audited self-management schemes and the use of industry guidelines and standards;*

(h) *Specifying controls on wet weather discharges from wastewater infrastructure;*

(i) *Providing for the protection of the significant value of wetlands in maintaining and improving water quality; and*

(j) *Providing for the use of contaminant offsetting for direct and diffuse discharges of sediments and non-toxic forms of nitrogen and phosphorus.*

(2) District councils shall include methods in district plans to manage the effects of subdivision and the development of land (including notices of requirement) for the purposes of improving the overall quality of fresh and coastal waters. Methods shall include:

(a) *Where appropriate, requiring esplanade reserves and esplanade strips where they will contribute to maintaining or improving water quality;*

(b) *Promoting new appropriately vegetated riparian buffer zones, including on esplanade reserves or esplanade strips; and*

(c) *Considering the adoption of low impact urban design techniques to minimise the potential adverse effects of contaminants on receiving waters, such as using constructed and restored wetlands.*

Explanation:
Method 4.2.2(1) recognises that new and amended rules and other methods are required to better address diffuse source contamination from the use and development of land, as well as poorly treated and untreated discharges of wastewater.

It is well understood that livestock in rivers, lakes, and wetlands contribute to reduced water quality through disturbance to their beds and margins and the introduction of nutrients and faecal contaminants in dung and urine. Method 4.2.2(1)(a) involves amending existing and including new rules in the relevant regional plan to prevent the adverse effects of stock access to the beds and margins of water bodies. Rules should reinforce the intent of the Sustainable Dairying: Water Accord.

The method also encourages additional stock exclusion requirements in all other areas. In some places stock exclusion may not be practicable for reasons such as topography, access to stock drinking water, flooding and costs of exclusion measures (for example, fencing). However there is an expectation that good management practices will be implemented.

Good management practices refers to the evolving suite of tools or practical measures that can be put in place at land user, sector, or industry levels to assist in achieving outcomes for water quality. There is growing recognition that good management practices are important not only for maintaining and improving water

quality but for protecting the reputation of primary industries as sustainable producers. Method 4.2.2(1)(c) will involve changing the Regional Water and Soil Plan (RWSP) to require and incentivise such good management practices.

Audited self-management involves the transfer of the day-to-day management responsibility from the regional council to resource users under agreed terms, and subject to transparent audit. It is a key tool in implementing good management practices. Method 4.2.2(1)(d) sets out the regional council's intention to provide for audited self-management schemes through regional plans.

Method 4.2.2(1)(e) recognises the need to better address wet weather overflows and leakage from wastewater reticulation and treatment infrastructure, which remains an issue in some coastal areas.

While the operative RWSP currently contains strong controls to protect indigenous wetlands for their ecological values, there is also a need to protect the significant value of wetlands in maintaining and improving water quality. Method 4.2.2(1)(f) involves amending the RWSP to strengthen such controls. This is consistent with Objectives A2 and B4 of the NPSFM which seek that the significant values of wetlands are protected.

Method 4.2.2(1)(g) recognises that the costs of managing the same contaminant can vary between different sources in a catchment. For example, the cost of reducing nitrogen levels from a wastewater treatment plant may greatly exceed the costs of reducing the same amount of nitrogen from elsewhere in the catchment and vice versa. Water quality offsetting initiatives allow resource users facing high regulatory costs to meet rules by mitigating contaminant loads from another source or sources at a lower cost. However it is recognised that there are limitations to the practicality of implementing offsetting

While water management is principally a regional council function district councils also have a role as part of controlling land use development. Method 4.2.2(2) requires the district councils to provide for the overall improvement of water quality when managing development. The method clearly defines the role of the district councils to avoid regulatory overlap and to enhance the integrated management of water.

4.2.3 Method – Advocacy and education

(1) The regional council will promote and support voluntary efforts to improve the overall quality of fresh and coastal waters, including:

(a) The implementation of good management practices for minimising diffuse source contamination; and

(b) Landowner and community catchment restoration and enhancement initiatives, such as riparian planting and fencing and constructing and restoring wetlands.

(2) The regional council will assist Northland District Health Board and district councils to educate rural water users about the health risks of drinking untreated water and to provide information about alternative options (including treatment and other sources).

Explanation:
Method 4.2.3 recognises the importance of non-regulatory initiatives for improving overall water quality. It also recognises that good management and innovation should be encouraged. These include environmental guidelines, codes of practice and environmental accords that have been developed and adopted by industry.

Because the regional council is the principal agency in Northland for managing water quality it is important that it assists the Northland District Health Board and district council's to educate people about the risks associated with drinking untreated water from rivers, streams and other sources.

4.2.4 Method – Funding and assistance

(1) The regional council will work with landowners, land managers, and industry groups to:

- *(a) Develop and implement good management practices;*
- *(b) Reduce loss of sediment, nutrients, and faecal matter from land;*
- *(c) Trap and store sediment, nutrients and faecal matter that is transported off site through the use of existing and constructed wetlands; and*
- *(d) Manage and enhance riparian margins to improve water quality and aquatic ecosystems.*

Explanation:
Good management practices are important for minimising loads of diffuse source contaminants to water to achieve water management objectives. The regional council will provide technical and financial support for the development and uptake of good management practices. Ratepayer funded assistance is provided in recognition that there are wider community benefits from improved water quality.

4.3 Region-wide water quantity management

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 4.3 are:

3.1 Integrated catchment management

3.2 Region-wide water quality

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels

3.5 Enabling economic wellbeing

3.10 Use and allocation of common resources

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural landscapes, outstanding natural features, and historic heritage

3.15 Active management

4.3.1 Policy - Interim region-wide ecological flows and water levels

Establish interim region-wide ecological flows and water levels for water bodies outside of priority catchments to give effect to Objective 3.3 of this Regional Policy Statement.

Explanation:
Section 4.1 of this Regional Policy Statement directs the regional council to work collaboratively with communities to progressively establish catchment-specific objectives, water quality limits and environmental flows and water levels.

Environmental flows and water levels are flows and water levels required to provide for uses and values sought by a catchment-specific objective. These may include ecological, cultural, amenity, recreational, landscape, natural character and other values associated with water.

Until such time as these are established with catchment communities it is necessary to set region-wide ecological flows and water levels to reduce the potential for ecological values to be adversely affected by the taking, using, damming, or diverting of fresh water.

As well as protecting the integrity of aquatic ecosystems, ecological flows and water levels also provide certainty for existing and potential water users, and the wider community, on security of water supply.

4.3.2 Policy – Avoiding over-allocation

Establish regulatory methods to avoid or phase out the over-allocation of region-wide ecological flows and water levels.

Explanation:
Policy 4.3.2 directs the regional council to amend existing and include new rules in the Regional Water and Soil Plan that prevent the exceedance of allocation limits and protect minimum flows and water levels. This direction is consistent with Policy B5 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

4.3.3 Policy – Efficient allocation and use of water

Allocate and use water efficiently within allocation limits.

Explanation:
While water is generally abundant in most areas of Northland, a changing climate and increasing demand for water require it to be allocated and used more efficiently.

The efficiency of the "first in first served" approach to allocating water can be improved by setting clear allocation limits in plans, by providing for low cost transfer of water permits, and by encouraging efficient water use so that water is available for further allocation. Making the use of water more efficient will help prevent disruptions to supply during dry periods.

4.3.4 Policy – Water harvesting, storage and conservation

Recognise and promote the benefits of water harvesting, storage, and conservation measures.

Explanation:
Security and reliability of supply can be increased by harvesting and storing water for distribution and use during shortages.

Water harvesting, storage, and conservation can improve the efficient allocation and use of water. These measures will become increasingly important – particularly in Northland because of its many short catchments – as demand for water increases and the local climate changes with longer dry spells and more frequent high intensity rain events. Water storage measures can also have other benefits such as buffering storm flows, recharging aquifers, creating habitat and improving recreational opportunities.

Policy 4.3.4 is an important consideration for decision-makers when assessing applications for resource consents and changing regional and district plans.

4.3.5 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) The regional council will change relevant regional plans to:

- *(a) Include interim region-wide ecological flows and levels for water bodies outside of priority catchments.*
- *(b) Maintain region-wide ecological flows and water levels and catchment-specific environmental flows and water levels, including by:*
  - *(i) Requiring that no take on its own or in combination with any other take/s exceeds a minimum flow or level, or allocation limit; and*
  - *(ii) Requiring common review dates on all water permits in a catchment under section 128(1)(a) of the Resource Management Act as a method to assess the potential for adverse cumulative effects on flows and levels;*

(c) *Include policies and methods to improve the efficient allocation of water, including by:*

(i) *Requiring that the intended rate and quantity of water is reasonable and justified for the proposed use;*

(ii) *Providing for the efficient transfer of water permits;*

(iii) *Promoting water user groups; and*

(iv) *Requiring, as a condition of water permits for municipal supply, contingency plans for the supply of water during drought periods when the required volume of water cannot be taken from the consented source.*

(d) *Require the efficient use of water in permitted and consented consumptive takes to the extent that is reasonable based on the level of existing allocation and likely future demand pressure in the catchment.*

(2) *If necessary the regional council will review conditions of water permits under section 128(1)(b) of the Resource Management Act to enable region-wide ecological and catchment-specific environmental flows and water levels to be met.*

(3) *The regional council will investigate unauthorised takes and require that they are reduced to comply with permitted activities or conditions of water permits.*

(4) *To improve the efficient allocation and use of water the regional council will amend its relevant regional plans to include direction on metering requirements for consented takes of less than five litres per second, which are not covered by the Resource Management (Measuring and Reporting of Water Takes) Regulations 2010.*

(5) *The regional council will include policies and methods in the relevant regional plans to protect the significant values of wetlands in buffering storm flows, and recharging aquifers.*

Explanation:
Region-wide ecological flows and water levels reduce the potential for adverse effects on ecological values and improve the security and reliability of water supply. Method 4.3.5(1)(a) recognises that they are an interim arrangement until such time as catchment-specific environmental flows and water levels are established. Policy and methods on catchment-specific environmental flows and water levels are covered in section 4.1 of this Regional Policy Statement.

Region-wide ecological flows and water levels can be set by a number of different methodologies. The regional council will determine the appropriate methodology or methodologies through *Waiora Northland Water,* its programme for implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM).

The regional council will also need to amend its Regional Water and Soil Plan (RWSP) to prevent over-allocation and in doing so maintain ecological flows and water levels.

There is also a need to improve the efficient allocation of water, particularly in catchments that may be highly allocated. While a "first in first served" approach to

allocating water will never be entirely efficient it can be improved, and Method 4.3.5(1)(c) identifies a number of key ways that this can be done.

Requiring that that water takes are reasonable and justified for the proposed use ensures that water is available for further allocation.

Section 134 of the Resource Management Act provides for the limited transfer of water permits. This can be enabled by providing clear guidance in the RWSP so that administrative costs are minimised.

Levels of allocation can be high 'on paper' but generally only a proportion is actually used at any point in time. This means that while water may be available new users can be excluded from gaining access to it. Water user groups are a mechanism for addressing this. They can be formal or informal arrangements for coordinating water takes, distribution, and use.

Contingency plans will be required for municipal takes to demonstrate how domestic water supply will be continued during drought periods when the required volume of water cannot be taken from the normal water resource. Generally contingency plans will not be required for consented takes for commercial purposes.

The efficient use of water in all consumptive water takes is important in order for water to be available for further allocation. Method 4.3.5(1)(d) recognises that the level of efficiency required should reflect the level of existing allocation and the likelihood for further demand.

Method 4.3.5(2) states the regional council's intention to review if necessary conditions of water permits to ensure that all takes are efficient to meet minimum flows and levels and allocation limits.

Robust information is needed on how much water is being taken in catchments so that available water can be efficiently and equitably allocated. Water takes can be accounted for in a catchment by way of direct measurement (that is, water metering) or estimation through computer modelling. The Resource Management (Measurement and Reporting of Water Takes) Regulations 2010 requires that all takes of equal to and greater than 5 litres per second are metered. Metering on takes of less than 5 litres per second may not be required in catchments that are assessed as under-allocated and which would remain under-allocated upon grant of a water permit. However, metering on takes of less than 5 litres per second may be required where allocation is assessed as high relative to a region-wide allocation limit or where there is an increasing demand to full allocation. Direction on metering requirements for takes of less than 5 litres per second will be included in the RWSP by way of a plan change.

The NPSFM directs the regional council to protect the significant values of wetlands. While the operative RWSP currently contains rules to protect indigenous wetlands for their ecological values there is also a need to protect the significant values of wetlands in buffering storm flows and recharging aquifers. Protecting these values will help maintain water flows and levels, maintain and improve water availability, and assist with water storage.

4.3.6 Method – Advocacy and education

(1) The regional council will promote the establishment of water user groups, particularly in areas with high demand / high allocation.

(2) The regional and district councils shall promote water harvesting, water storage (including within constructed wetlands) and water conservation methods (such as reusing and recycling) for new developments and changes in land use, including developments that are serviced by municipal supplies.

(3) The regional and district councils shall encourage retrofitting of existing buildings for the purposes of water conservation.

(4) The regional council will assist investigations into potentially appropriate locations for large-scale water storage infrastructure.

Explanation:

Method 4.3.6 sets out a number of water efficiency initiatives that should be promoted and supported by the regional council and district councils.

Method 4.3.6(1) involves the regional council promoting water user groups to improve the efficient allocation and use of water.

Councils also have a role to play in promoting and encouraging the efficient use of water. During droughts, efficiency measures can take pressure off municipal supplies and can mitigate adverse effects on social and economic wellbeing.

Over time, a changing climate and increasing demand for water resources are likely to incentivise the creation of large-scale water infrastructure such as dams. The regional council has undertaken a number of studies into suitable locations and can assist with future investigations.

4.4 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous ecosystems and species

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 4.4 are:

3.2 Region-wide water quality

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural landscapes, outstanding natural features, and historic heritage

3.15 Active management

4.4.1 Policy – Maintaining and protecting significant ecological areas and habitats

(1) In the coastal environment, avoid adverse effects, and outside the coastal environment avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of subdivision, use and development so they are no more than minor on:

(a) Indigenous taxa that are listed as threatened or at risk in the New Zealand Threat Classification System lists;

(b) Areas of indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna, that are significant using the assessment criteria in Appendix 5;

(c) Areas set aside for full or partial protection of indigenous biodiversity under other legislation.

(2) In the coastal environment, avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy, or mitigate other adverse effects of subdivision, use and development on:

(a) Areas of predominantly indigenous vegetation;

(b) Habitats of indigenous species that are important for recreational, commercial, traditional or cultural purposes;

(c) Indigenous ecosystems and habitats that are particularly vulnerable to modification, including estuaries, lagoons, coastal wetlands, dunelands, intertidal zones, rocky reef systems, eelgrass, northern wet heathlands, coastal and headwater streams, floodplains, margins of the coastal marine area and freshwater bodies, spawning and nursery areas and saltmarsh.

(3) Outside the coastal environment and where clause (1) does not apply, avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of subdivision, use and development so they are not significant on any of the following:

(a) Areas of predominantly indigenous vegetation;

(b) Habitats of indigenous species that are important for recreational, commercial, traditional or cultural purposes;

(c) Indigenous ecosystems and habitats that are particularly vulnerable to modification, including wetlands, dunelands, northern wet heathlands, headwater streams, floodplains and margins of freshwater bodies, spawning and nursery areas.

(4) For the purposes of clause (1), (2) and (3), when considering whether there are any adverse effects and/or any significant adverse effects:

(a) Recognise that a minor or transitory effect may not be an adverse effect;

(b) *Recognise that where the effects are or maybe irreversible, then they are likely to be more than minor;*

(c) *Recognise that there may be more than minor cumulative effects from minor or transitory effects.*

(5) *For the purpose of clause (3) if adverse effects cannot be reasonably avoided, remedied or mitigated then it maybe appropriate to consider the next steps in the mitigation hierarchy i.e. biodiversity offsetting followed by environmental biodiversity compensation, as methods to achieve Objective 3.4.*

Explanation:
Policy 4.1 seeks to protect important indigenous ecosystems and habitats and maintain the diversity of indigenous species. The policy reflects Policy 11 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2011, which applies in the coastal environment, and takes into account the decision of the Supreme Court in King Salmon (*Environmental Defence Society Inc v The New Zealand King Salmon Co Ltd* [2014] NZSC 38).

The management approach has a tiered protection structure. Policy 4.4.1(1) provides the highest level of protection to ecosystems, habitats, and species (biological values) most at risk of irreversible loss, with the appropriate management response being to avoid adverse effects in the coastal environment and to ensure there are no more than minor effects elsewhere.

Areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats fall within this first tier and the criteria to identify these areas are provided in Appendix 5.

Policy 4.1 (2) and (3) provides a lower level of protection for ecosystems, habitats, and species at a lesser risk of loss. It covers the coastal environment and elsewhere.

It should be noted that Policy 4.1 (2) and (3) are broader in scope than section 6(c) of the Resource Management Act, which requires the protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous species as a matter of national importance. This is because in Northland many such habitats have been degraded, so there is a greater need to give some protection to the valued habitats that remain extant.

4.4.2 Policy – Supporting restoration and enhancement

Support voluntary efforts of landowners and community groups, iwi and hapū, to achieve Objective 3.15.

Explanation:
Regulation under the RMA only plays a partial role in safeguarding and enhancing the ecological integrity of indigenous ecosystems.

Policy 4.2 recognises that the stewardship of landowners and community groups is vital for achieving the objective.

4.4.3 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) Subject to Method 4.4.3(3), within two years after the Regional Policy Statement becomes operative the regional council will amend regional plans to the extent needed to ensure the plans implement Policy 4.4.1 for water bodies (including wetlands), in, on, or under the beds of rivers and lakes, and in the coastal marine area. Principal methods include:

- *(a) Freshwater objectives and associated environmental flows and / or levels and freshwater quality limits, and regulatory methods to achieve them, such as controls on discharges and the use of land;*
- *(b) Coastal water quality classifications and associated water quality standards, and regulatory methods to achieve them, such as controls on discharges and the use of land;*
- *(c) Controls on use and development of beds of lakes, rivers, and wetlands;*
- *(d) Controls on use and development of the coastal marine area; and*
- *(e) Controls on use and development that could have adverse effects by causing aquatic pest species to be released or otherwise spread.*

(2) Subject to Method 4.4.3(3), *within two years after the Regional Policy Statement becomes operative the district councils shall amend district plans to the extent needed to ensure the plans implement Policy 4.4.1 on land outside of the beds of rivers and lakes, wetlands, and the coastal marine area. Methods of implementation include:*

- *(a) Controls on the disturbance of land and the clearance of vegetation; and*
- *(b) Controls on the introduction or keeping of species with recognised pest potential.*

(3) In implementing Policy 4.4.1 regional and district plans shall:

- *(a) Allow activities undertaken for the purposes of pest control or habitat maintenance or enhancement;*
- *(b) Consider biodiversity offsets in appropriate circumstances;*
- *(c) Allow the maintenance and use of existing structures including infrastructure; and*
- *(d) Not unreasonably restrict the existing use of production land, including forestry.*

Explanation:
Policy 4.4.1 is implemented principally through Methods 4.4.3(1), and (2), which provide clear direction on respective regulatory responses of the regional and district councils. In doing so, the methods limit the potential for regulatory overlap. The methods are also consistent with the statement of the regional and district council responsibilities for the control of the use of land to maintain indigenous biodiversity (refer Section 1.6 – Statement of the regional and district council responsibilities).

Method 4.4.3(2)(b) may include pest species, including terrestrial, aquatic and marine pest plants, animals and organisms, and some domestic cats and dogs.

Method 4.4.3(3), states limitations and provides guidance on the scope of regulatory methods to implement Policy 4.4.1. Method 4.4.3(3)(a), directs the regional and district councils to make it easier to undertake pest control for the purposes of

maintaining indigenous biodiversity. This is necessary to allow quicker responses to incursions and to reduce procedural costs for those responsible for undertaking pest management. The Regional Pest Strategy identifies species with 'recognised pest potential'.

Method 4.4.3(3)(b) provides for indigenous biodiversity offsets as a way to counteract the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development on the biological values listed under Policy 4.4.1. What will be an “appropriate” offset will depend on the case-by-case circumstances and current best practice.

Method 4.4.3(3)(c) and (d) ensure that existing uses are not unreasonably restricted by rules to implement Policy 4.4.1 as provided for by method 5.3.4.

Ecologically beneficial use and development and voluntary efforts can be actively encouraged by including appropriate rules and incentives in regional and district plans.

4.4.4 Method – Monitoring and information gathering

(1) In partnership with other regional councils, district councils, the Department of Conservation, other agencies and iwi, the regional council will work to implement and report against a nationally consistent set of indigenous bio*diversity indicators for both terrestrial and aquatic environments.*

(2) In collaboration with other regional councils, district councils, the Department of Conservation, and potentially other agencies and iwi, the regional council will develop guidance to assist with the identification of areas meeting Appendix 5 significance criteria.

(3) The regional council will, in collaboration with district councils, the Department of Conservation and iwi, and in consultation with affected landowners:

- *(a) Determine and implement priorities for identifying areas of significant vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna; and*
- *(b) Establish priorities for action on indigenous biodiversity and pest control that enables a coordinated effective pest management to achieve Objective 3.4.*

Explanation:
Information about the locations and attributes of indigenous ecosystems and species is reasonably good but far from complete. Until landowners, the wider community, and councils have much better information there will always be a risk of further decline or loss.

Method 4.4.4(1) recognises that the regional and district councils have limited information on the current states of indigenous ecosystems, habitats, and species. Improving state of the environment monitoring for them will contribute to district, regional, and national reporting and enable good decisions.

Method 4.4.4(2) and (3) commits the regional council to working with other agencies, iwi and landowners to develop ecological guidance and identify areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna. The purpose of this process is to inform and educate landowners so that they can make informed decisions about the use of their properties. The improved criteria and data will also

assist those planning subdivision, use and development, and decision-makers in processing resource consents by determining significant indigenous biodiversity matters and whether an ecological assessment may or may not be required.

Method 4.4.4(3)(b) commits the regional council to setting priorities for action on biodiversity and pest control.

4.4.5 Method – Advocacy and education

The regional and district councils should promote voluntary efforts to achieve Objective 3.4 Methods include:

(a) Providing advice on voluntary mechanisms for protecting significant ecological areas and species;

(b) Liaising with relevant agencies when developing strategies, research proposals, or undertaking investigations related to the management and protection of ecological areas and species; and

(c) Assisting organisations with investigations into the establishment of national parks, marine and other reserves, and advocating related initiatives to central government.

Explanation:
Policy 4.4.2 recognises the importance of the regional and district council support for such voluntary efforts. Method 4.4.5 sets out the key ways that councils should provide support.

4.4.6 Method – Funding and assistance

The regional council should, where appropriate, provide funding and technical assistance for voluntary restoration and enhancement efforts.

Explanation:
The regional council provides financial support through its Environment Fund and technical assistance through its land management and biosecurity departments. Because resources are limited, Method 4.4.6 recognises that the regional council needs to be selective about where it assists voluntary restoration and enhancement.

4.5 Identifying the coastal environment, natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage resources

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 4.5 are:

3.2 Region-wide water quality

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes, and historic heritage

4.5.1 Policy – Identification of the coastal environment, outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes and high and outstanding natural character

The areas identified in the Regional Policy Statement - Maps will form Northland's:

(a) Coastal environment;

(b) High and outstanding natural character areas within the coastal environment (except where the coastal marine area beyond harbours / estuaries remain unclassified); and

(c) Outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes.

Where following further detailed assessment, an area in the Regional Policy Statement – Maps has been amended in accordance with Method 4.5.4, and the amended area is operative in the relevant district or regional plan, it shall supersede the relevant area in the Regional Policy Statement – Maps.

Explanation:

This policy assists in the implementation of s6. Resource Management Act and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) by:

- Identifying the coastal environment;
- Identifying high and outstanding natural character areas (in the coastal environment); and
- Identifying outstanding natural features and landscapes.

Policy and methods on the management of these areas is provided in sections 4.6 and 4.7.

The regional council has mapped these areas. The maps form part of the Regional Policy Statement and are to be given effect to in district and relevant regional plans. These maps are supported by worksheets which are available from the Northland Regional Council. Any further assessments should use the attributes and criteria in Appendix 1.

The policy contemplates refinement of the maps in accordance with Method 4.5.4, following further detailed assessment, provided the change is undertaken using the attributes and criteria listed in Appendix 1. This is to ensure a consistent approach is adopted where such changes are proposed.

4.5.2 Policy – Application of the Regional Policy Statement - Maps

The Regional Policy Statement Maps of high and outstanding natural character and outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes identify areas that are sensitive to subdivision, use and development. The maps of these areas identify where caution is required to ensure activities are appropriate. However, suitably qualified assessment at a site or property-specific level can be used to demonstrate lesser (or greater) sensitivity to particular subdivision, use and development proposals given the greater resolution provided.

Explanation:
The Regional Policy Statement Maps of high and outstanding natural character, outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes identify those areas where caution is required to ensure subdivision, use and development is appropriate. They have been developed using the best information available and ground tested where practicable.

This policy recognises that despite best endeavours, the maps may not always be accurate at individual property or site-scale. Therefore qualified site or property-specific assessment at greater resolution and accuracy may be able to demonstrate that the values are not present or are of less (or more) significance than depicted on the maps or that a lesser (or greater) degree of sensitivity and / or caution is warranted in relation to specific proposals. However this does not equate to re-litigation of the maps or a requirement to amend maps.

4.5.3 Policy – Assessing, identifying and recording historic heritage

Historic heritage resources (areas, places, sites, buildings, or structures either individually or as a group) are identified taking into account one or more of the following criteria:

(a) Archaeological and / or scientific importance: the resource contributes significantly to our understanding of human history or archaeological research;

(b) Architecture and technology: the structure or building is significant due to design, form, scale, materials, style, period, craftsmanship, construction technique or other unique element / characteristic;

(c) Rarity: the resource or site is unique, uncommon or rare at a district, regional or national level;

(d) Representativeness: the resource is an excellent example of its class in terms of design, type, use, technology, time period or other characteristic;

(e) Integrity: the resource retains a high proportion of its original characteristics and integrity compared with other examples in the district or region;

(f) *Context: the resource forms part of an association of heritage sites or buildings which, when considered as a whole, become important at a district, regional or national scale;*

(g) *People and events: the resource is directly associated with the life or works of a well-known or important individual, group or organisation and / or is associated with locally, regionally or nationally significant historic events;*

(h) *Identity: the resource provides a sense of place, community identity or cultural or historical continuity;*

(i) *Tangata whenua: the resource place or feature is important to tangata whenua for traditional, spiritual, cultural or historic reasons; and*

(j) *Statutory: the resource or feature is recognised nationally or internationally, including: a World Heritage Site under the World Heritage Convention 1972; is registered under the Historic Places Act 1993; or is recognised as having significant heritage value under a statutory acknowledgement or other legislation.*

Explanation:
Historic heritage resources that meet the criteria under Policy 4.5.3 warrant protection from inappropriate development in accordance with section 6(f) of the RMA. These are the historic heritage resources to be identified in regional and district plans. The decision on which other heritage features (that do not meet the criteria in this policy) to include in plans is left to individual councils. The criteria used are based on those developed by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. The term historic heritage has the same meaning as the definition in section 2 of the Resource Management Act.

4.5.4 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) Within two years of this Regional Policy Statement becoming operative (or the first relevant plan change after the Regional Policy Statement becoming operative, whichever is the earlier) the regional and district councils shall notify a plan change to their relevant regional and district plans to incorporate the Regional Policy Statement – Maps subject to Method 4.5.4(2).

(2) The coastal environment, and areas of high and outstanding natural character within the coastal environment, and outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes as shown in the Regional Policy Statement – Maps may be changed, provided the changes are:

(i) Undertaken using the attributes and criteria listed in Appendix 1; and

(ii) Shown in the regional or district plan.

(3) As soon as practicable after this Regional Policy Statement becoming operative the regional and district councils (in collaboration with the Department of Conservation, tangata whenua, and New Zealand Historic Places Trust, and in consultation with affected landowners (and where relevant, local communities) will identify historic heritage accordance with the criteria in Policy 4.5.3. Once identified, the historic heritage that meets the criteria in Policy 4.5.3 will be included within the relevant regional and district plan by way of maps and / or schedules or alert layers where appropriate. Where a heritage area, site, building or other feature spans a council

jurisdictional boundary (for example, the coastal marine area) it will be recorded in the schedules and / or maps of both relevant plans.

(4) Within two years of the Regional Policy Statement becoming operative the regional and district councils shall undertake a joint exercise to identify and implement the most cost effective and efficient process to map the physical extent of those outstanding natural features listed in Appendix 4, and include the resulting maps into appropriate district and regional plans.

Explanation:
The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) applies specific requirements in the coastal environment, which means the coastal environment must also be defined to effectively implement the NZCPS. This method therefore requires that district plans and relevant regional plans include the maps as a first step to protection. The maps identifying these areas are included in the Regional Policy Statement to provide consistency and efficiency. The Regional Policy Statement also provides for these maps to be refined. Maps must be incorporated into regional and district plans within the timeframes specified in Method 4.5.4(1). It is intended that the maps and plan provisions be inserted into the plans at the same time.

Method 4.5.4(2) allows for the mapped areas to be changed at any time (using the Schedule 1 process), including before the plan change required by Method 4.5.4(1). However, any changes need to be consistent with the attributes and criteria listed in Appendix 1.

Method 4.5.4(3) gives effect to Policy 4.5.3 and requires a collaborative approach to identification of significant heritage resources. The multi-agency / council approach will also provide greater consistency and efficiency in applying criteria (as opposed to each council undertaking a separate independent process).

Method 4.5.4(4) recognises that there is some further work required in relation to outstanding natural features. Outstanding natural features have been identified using the Geopreservation Inventory for Northland as a basis (Inventory and Maps of Important Geological Sites and Landforms in the Northland Region; Kenny J. A. and Hayward B. W.; Geological Society of New Zealand 1996). However, not all sites identified in the inventory have been mapped by the Geological Society. Such sites where the spatial extent is not defined are not identified on the Regional Policy Statement Maps given the uncertainty this creates.

This is an acknowledged gap and Method 4.5.4(3) intends to remedy this by progressively providing maps of those features that meet the criteria for outstanding natural features or warrant further investigation. The features that require further assessment and mapping are listed in Appendix 4. This project relies on particular expertise and will involve research and field work; hence no time limits are specified.

4.6 Managing effects on natural character, features / landscapes and heritage

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 4.6 are:

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity	*3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural landscapes, outstanding natural features, and historic heritage*

4.6.1 Policy – Managing effects on the characteristics and qualities natural character, natural features and landscapes

(1) In the coastal environment:

a) Avoid adverse effects of subdivision use, and development on the characteristics and qualities which make up the outstanding values of areas of outstanding natural character, outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes.

b) Where (a) does not apply, avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of subdivision, use and development on natural character, natural features and natural landscapes. Methods which may achieve this include:

(i) Ensuring the location, intensity, scale and form of subdivision and built development is appropriate having regard to natural elements, landforms and processes, including vegetation patterns, ridgelines, headlands, peninsulas, dune systems, reefs and freshwater bodies and their margins; and

(ii) In areas of high natural character, minimising to the extent practicable indigenous vegetation clearance and modification (including earthworks / disturbance, structures, discharges and extraction of water) to natural wetlands, the beds of lakes, rivers and the coastal marine area and their margins; and

(iii) Encouraging any new subdivision and built development to consolidate within and around existing settlements or where natural character and landscape has already been compromised.

(2) Outside the coastal environment avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects (including cumulative adverse effects) of subdivision, use and development on the characteristics and qualities of outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes and the natural character of freshwater bodies. Methods which may achieve this include:

a) In outstanding natural landscapes, requiring that the location and intensity of subdivision, use and built development is appropriate having regard to, natural elements, landforms and processes, including vegetation patterns, ridgelines and freshwater bodies and their margins;

b) In outstanding natural features, requiring that the scale and intensity of earthworks and built development is appropriate taking into account the scale, form and vulnerability to modification of the feature;

c) *Minimising, indigenous vegetation clearance and modification (including earthworks / disturbance and structures) to natural wetlands, the beds of lakes, rivers and their margins.*

(3) *When considering whether there are any adverse effects on the characteristics and qualities[9] of the natural character, natural features and landscape values in terms of (1)(a), whether there are any significant adverse effects and the scale of any adverse effects in terms of (1)(b) and (2), and in determining the character, intensity and scale of the adverse effects:*

a) *Recognise that a minor or transitory effect may not be an adverse effect;*

b) *Recognise that many areas contain ongoing use and development that:*
   (i) *Were present when the area was identified as high or outstanding or have subsequently been lawfully established*
   (ii) *May be dynamic, diverse or seasonal;*

c) *Recognise that there may be more than minor cumulative adverse effects from minor or transitory adverse effects; and*

d) *Have regard to any restoration and enhancement on the characteristics and qualities of that area of natural character, natural features and/or natural landscape.*

Explanation:
This policy seeks to manage adverse effects on natural character, landscape and natural features. It specifies the level of protection to be achieved for the resources in question. It applies a hierarchy of protection based on context and value following the direction in Policies 13 and 15 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) and s6 of the Resource Management Act (RMA). In effect, the policy states the level or scale of effect that is inappropriate for the resource in question.

Policy 4.6.1 gives effect to the NZCPS, taking into account the decision of the Supreme Court in King Salmon (*Environmental Defence Society Inc v The New Zealand King Salmon Co Ltd* [2014] NZSC 38)

This approach is also specifically contemplated in Objective 2 and Policies 13(1)(d) and 15(d) of the NZCPS that direct regional policy statements and plans to identify where protection of natural character, natural features and landscapes is required (and by default, where it is not) and what forms of use and development would be inappropriate in those areas (and, by inference, forms of use and development which are appropriate in those areas).

4.6.2 Policy – Maintaining the integrity of heritage resources

(1) *Protect the integrity of historic heritage resources that have been identified in plans in accordance with Policy 4.5.3 and Method 4.5.4(3):*

a) *By avoiding significant adverse effects of subdivision, use and development and avoiding, remedying or mitigating other adverse effects (including cumulative adverse effects) on historic heritage in the following way:*

[9] For areas that have been mapped, the worksheets referred to in Appendix 1 identify characteristics and qualities.

(i) Requiring careful design and location of subdivision, use and development to retain heritage buildings and other physical elements of historic heritage and where practical enhance public use and access;

(ii) Restricting the demolition / relocation of and / or inappropriate modifications, additions or alterations to physical elements of historic heritage;

(iii) Recognising that the integrity of many historic heritage resources relies on context and maintain these relationships in the design and location of subdivision, use and development;

(iv) Recognising the collective value of groups of heritage buildings, structures and / or places, particularly where these are representative of Northland's historic settlements, architecture or periods in history and maintain the wider character of such areas; and

(v) Restricting activities that compromise important spiritual or cultural values held by Māori / Mana Whenua and / or the wider community in association with particular heritage places or features.

(2) Despite the above:

a) Clause 1 does not apply where natural hazards threaten the viability of regionally significant infrastructure and / or public health and safety; or

b) Regionally significant infrastructure proposals that cannot meet 4.6.2(1) may still be appropriate after assessment against the matters in Policy 5.3.3(3).

Explanation

This policy reflects the direction in section 6(f) of the Resource Management Act (RMA) that historic heritage is to be protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. This policy sets out the level of protection to be provided for historic heritage that meet the criteria in Policy 4.5.3. It states that significant adverse effects on these historic heritage resources are to be avoided (in other words significant adverse effects on these historic heritage resources are inappropriate). It also sets out the means by which the integrity of these resources is to be protected. However, the policy provides exceptions from the protection sought in certain circumstances. These circumstances are those where the intent of the RMA as a whole is better served by providing for certain activities given the wider benefits of doing so. The case for these exceptions would need to be demonstrated through plan change or consent processes.

4.6.3 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

Regional and district plans shall be amended to the extent necessary to include objectives, policies and methods (and rules where necessary) to give effect to Policy 4.6.1 and 4.6.2:

(1) Methods in district plans shall include control of:

(i) The location, intensity and form of subdivision;

(ii) The location, scale and form of buildings and structures (outside freshwater bodies and the coastal marine area);

(iii) *The location and scale of earthworks and indigenous vegetation removal (outside wetlands and the beds of lakes, rivers and the coastal marine area); and*

(iv) *The disturbance, demolition or alteration of physical elements and / or structures of historic heritage that meet Policy 4.5.3 (outside the coastal marine area and beds of lakes and rivers).*

(2) Methods in regional plans shall include control of:

(i) *The location, scale and form of buildings and structures (within freshwater bodies and the coastal marine area);*

(ii) *Vegetation removal within and on the margins of the coastal marine area and freshwater bodies;*

(iii) *Earthworks, deposition and disturbance to and within beds of water bodies and the coastal marine area;*

(iv) *Drainage, diversion and extraction of and discharges to water; and*

(v) *The disturbance, demolition or alteration of physical elements and / or structures of historic heritage that meet Policy 4.5.3 (in the coastal marine area and beds of lakes and rivers).*

(3) Methods (as relevant to council functions) may include:

(i) *Assessment criteria, development standards and / or thresholds to control the scale, intensity, form and location of activities and (including for the purposes of controlling cumulative adverse effects);*

(ii) *The control of the character, scale, form and appearance of new built development in areas of historic heritage identified in plans;*

(iii) *A requirement for qualified heritage or cultural impact assessments where activities have the potential to adversely affect historic heritage;*

(iv) *Use of alert layers to advise of sensitive historic heritage or cultural sites without disclosure in plans; and*

(v) *Conditions on consents to provide buffers and / or setbacks between historic heritage and other incompatible activity.*

(4) In implementing 4.6.1 district and regional plans shall:

(i) *Permit the maintenance of existing authorised structures, buildings, accessways, infrastructure and production land; and*

(ii) *Not unduly restrict existing authorised use of land or render land incapable of reasonable use.*

(iii) *Recognise that there are urban development and/or specific use* zonings and/or designations in plans existing at the time that the Regional Policy Statement was made operative that seek to achieve consolidated development and efficient use of land and infrastructure. Where such a zoning or designation does not give effect to Policy 4.6.1, and there are viable alternatives for giving effect to Policy 4.6.1, then existing provisions relating to subdivision, use and development will not need to change.*

*Urban development and/or specific uses include:

- District plan zones (that were operative when the Regional Policy Statement commenced) where the primary purpose is to provide for urban residential, commercial or industrial use and development.

- Operative designations where the primary purpose is to provide for social or utility network infrastructure.

- Areas in operative regional plans where the primary purpose is to provide for specific use and development, such as mixing zones, aquaculture, moorings and marinas, wharves and ports (including ski-lanes, shipping/navigation channels, pipelines and cables associated with utility network infrastructure).

Explanation:
This method implements Policies 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 and requires councils to control the activities that have the potential to impact upon natural character, natural features / landscape and historic heritage. Control does not necessarily mean a resource consent is required. Permitted activity standards may be appropriate in some circumstances, provided the degree of control is sufficient to protect integrity of the resources to the extent sought in the policies.

The method also provides for use of other measures in 4.6.3(3) that are less targeted or where discretion in their use is warranted.

The method also states that in exercising control, councils must allow the maintenance of established authorised activities and not render land incapable of reasonable use as these are provided for in section 10 and section 85 of the Resource Management Act respectively.

4.6.4 Method – Monitoring and information gathering

The regional and district councils shall jointly develop and implement a monitoring strategy (to assess the effectiveness of the plans in achieving anticipated outcomes). The strategy will monitor outstanding natural landscape, outstanding natural features, high and outstanding natural character areas, and heritage features identified in the Regional Policy Statement – Maps. The regional and district councils shall consider roles for tangata whenua in the development and implementation of the monitoring strategy.

Explanation:
Currently, there is little monitoring of impacts on outstanding natural features / landscapes or natural character. This makes it difficult to assess whether the plan provisions are achieving the purpose of the Resource Management Act and New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010. A joint strategy it is appropriate as it is more efficient and results can be compared across Northland.

4.7 Supporting management and improvement

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 4.7 are:

3.1 Integrated catchment management

3.2 Region-wide water quality

3.3 Ecological flows and water levels

3.4 Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity

3.14 Natural character, outstanding natural landscapes, outstanding natural features, and historic heritage

3.15 Active management

4.7.1 Policy – Promote active management

In plan provisions and the resource consent process, recognise and promote the positive effects of the following activities that contribute to active management:

a) Pest control, particularly where it will complement an existing pest control project / programme;

b) Soil conservation / erosion control;

c) Measures to improve water quality in parts of the coastal marine area where it has deteriorated and is having significant adverse effects, or in freshwater bodies targeted for water quality enhancement;

d) Measures to improve flows and / or levels in over allocated freshwater bodies;

e) Re-vegetation with indigenous species, particularly in areas identified for natural character improvement;

f) Maintenance of historic heritage resources (including sites, buildings and structures);

g) Improvement of public access to and along the coastal marine area or the margins of rivers or lakes except where this would compromise the conservation of historic heritage or significant indigenous vegetation and / or significant habitats of indigenous fauna;

h) Exclusion of stock from waterways and areas of significant indigenous vegetation and / or significant habitats of indigenous fauna;

i) Protection of indigenous biodiversity values identified under Policy 4.4.1, outstanding natural character, outstanding natural landscapes or outstanding natural features either through legal means or physical works;

j) Removal of redundant or unwanted structures and / or buildings except where these are of historic heritage value or where removal reduces public access to and along the coast or lakes and rivers;

k) Restoration or creation of natural habitat and processes, including ecological corridors in association with indigenous biodiversity values identified under Policy 4.4.1, particularly wetlands and / or wetland sequences;

l) Restoration of natural processes in marine and freshwater habitats.

Explanation:
This policy recognises that regulation is typically only effective at preventing adverse effects and that other more proactive means are required if ongoing pressures / risks

or ‘legacy’ effects are to be remedied. Appropriate subdivision, use and development can provide an opportunity to address risks or remedy ongoing legacy effects and the policy seeks that these beneficial effects be given due weight in decision-making. The policy therefore states that items listed are to be seen as positive effects when assessing subdivision, use and development proposals, particularly where they target such pressures / risks in high value areas that may not otherwise be addressed.

4.7.2 Policy – Supporting landowner and community efforts

Support landowners, iwi, hapū, and community efforts to actively manage or improve key aspects of the environment especially where there is willing collaboration between participants and those efforts are directed at one or more of the activities in Policy 4.7.1.

Explanation:
The policy seeks to promote the active management of key resources that occurs outside the Resource Management Act (RMA) process and does not arise through plan provisions or resource consent or plan change processes. This tends to rely on voluntary efforts by motivated landowners, iwi / hapū and community groups. The activities identified in Policy 4.8.1 are those that contribute to the unique character of Northland or are attributed particular weight under the RMA. These areas are targeted because they tend to be those most valued by the public and resources should be concentrated to areas where public benefit is maximised.

The policy recognises that protection and enhancement efforts can come at a cost to individual landowners, tangata whenua and communities for what is in effect the wider public benefit. While the RMA provides for the control of use of land to protect or provide for areas identified in the policy (that is, rules in plans or as conditions of consent), in many cases protection and particularly enhancement requires active management that cannot be compelled by regulation.

The policy provides assistance where an activity goes above and beyond the requirements of the RMA. It is therefore not compensation for restrictions applied under plans or to fulfil consent requirements or the like.

4.7.3 Policy – Improving natural character

Except where in conflict with established uses promote rehabilitation and restoration of natural character in the manner described in Policy 4.7.1 in the following areas:

(a) Wetlands, rivers, lakes, estuaries, and their margins;

(b) Undeveloped or largely undeveloped natural landforms between settlements, such as coastal headlands, peninsulas, ridgelines, dune systems;

(c) Areas of high natural character;

(d) Land adjacent to outstanding natural character areas, outstanding natural features, and outstanding natural landscapes;

(e) *Remnants of indigenous coastal vegetation particularly where these are adjacent to water or can be linked to establish or enhance ecological corridors; and*

(f) *The areas or values identified in Policy 4.4.1 (protecting significant areas and species).*

Explanation:
This policy seeks restoration of natural character by encouraging the activities in Policy 4.7.1 in locations where there are likely to be the most gain and potential benefit. However, the policy excludes those areas where protection of natural character is not required as provided in Policy 4.6.1(3) or where this would conflict with established uses such as mineral extraction, infrastructure or primary production. This is because it is counterproductive to promote restoration efforts where they would be undermined or frustrated in the long-term.

4.7.4 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) Regional and district plans may use incentives to promote the outcomes sought in Policies 4.7.1, and 4.7.3 provided that;

(a) The plan provisions require applicants to demonstrate that net public or other environmental benefit is achieved;

(b) The effects of any increased development entitlement have been addressed; and

(c) The benefits provided are not required to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects, fulfil requirements of a condition of consent or to meet regulatory requirements of a plan (such as, permitted activity standards) or other legal mechanism, such as a covenant, easement, designation or private agreement / contract.

(2) Regional and district plans will include objectives policies and methods to promote activities identified in Policy 4.7.1.

Explanation:
This method implements Policies 4.7.1, and 4.7.3 by identifying the circumstances where incentives may be used, and requires that they achieve a certain public or environmental benefit. The areas targeted are generally matters of national importance in the Resource Management Act, areas targeted for restoration and / or those areas valued by communities. These areas are targeted to maximise public good.

This method gives effect to Policy 14 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 by identifying areas and opportunities for the restoration of natural character.

4.7.5 Method – Non-statutory plans and strategies

Regional and district plans may consider the use of non-regulatory mechanisms to assist in achieving policies 4.7.1, 4.7.2 and 4.7.3 for outstanding natural features, landscapes, natural character and regionally and nationally significant heritage using one or more of the following:

(a) Funding assistance for restoration projects (for example, the environment fund);

(b) Purchase of land (for example, use of development contributions);

(c) Development / design guidelines;

(d) Rates relief;

(e) Education and advice;

(f) Assistance with investigations for heritage protection orders or marine protection initiatives; and

(g) Waiver or reduction of processing fees.

Explanation:
This policy identifies other means for councils to achieve the objectives for outstanding natural features and landscapes, natural character and heritage features but does not direct their use as these are Local Government Act 2002 decisions.

Particular consideration should be given to these measures where development pressure is low and development incentives are likely to be less effective.

4.8 Efficient use of coastal water space

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 4.8 are:	
3.5 Enabling economic wellbeing	*3.10 Use and allocation of common resources*

4.8.1 Policy – Demonstrate the need to occupy space in the common marine and coastal area

(1) Only consider allowing structures, the use of structures and other activities that occupy space in the common marine and coastal area where:

- *(a) They have a functional need to be located in the common marine and coastal area, unless the structure, use or activity is consistent with Policy 4.8.1(2)*;
- *(b) It is not feasible for the structure, the use or the occupation of space to be undertaken on dry land (land outside the common marine and coastal area), unless it is consistent with Policy 4.8.1(2);*
- *(c) It is not feasible to use an existing authorised structure; and*
- *(d) The area occupied is necessary to provide for or undertake the intended use.*

(2) Occupation of space and structures (and their use) that are contrary to Policy 4.8.1(1) (a) and (b) may be appropriate where they will make a significant positive contribution to the local area or the region.

(3) If the public are excluded from using a structure or common marine and coastal area, the exclusion is:

- *(a) Only for the time period(s) and the area necessary to provide for or undertake the intended use ;or*
- *(b) Necessary to ensure the integrity of the structure; or*
- *(c) Necessary to ensure the health and safety of the public.*

Explanation:
This policy directs decision-makers to ensure the occupation of space in the common marine and coastal area is efficient. It considers whether there is a functional need to occupy space in the common marine and coastal area and the area occupied is necessary for the activity Additionally, there are some structures that functionally necessitate restrictions on public access (such as for health and safety reasons and to protect the integrity of structures).

Activities like restaurants, residential dwellings, transmission lines and cafés may be located in the common marine and coastal area if they make a significant contribution to the local area or region.

To clarify, this policy is in effect a gateway test: if an activity doesn't conform to the policy then it should not be allowed. However, if an activity conforms to this policy, its environmental effects and any other relevant policies also need to be considered before determining whether it should be allowed.

4.8.2 Policy – Allocating space in high demand zones

Where the reasonably foreseeable demand exceeds the capacity of a zone, consideration will be given to implementing alternative allocation mechanisms (other than 'first in, first served') to achieve the most efficient use and allocation of space in the zone.

Explanation:
This policy recognises that 'first in, first served' may not be the most efficient allocation and use of space where the demand is likely to exceed the capacity of a zone.

The Resource Management Act 1991 provides options to develop alternative allocation mechanisms for coastal water space (for example, balloting or tendering). The type of allocation mechanism is likely to be different depending on the circumstance.

"Capacity" in this policy includes physical capacity (for example, space and ecological carrying capacity) and any limits set by regulation (for example, nitrogen caps).

4.8.3 Policy – Coastal permit duration

When determining the expiry date for coastal permits to occupy space in the common marine and coastal area, particular regard will be had to:

(a) The security of tenure for investment (the larger the investment, the longer the consent duration);

(b) Aligning the expiry date with other coastal permits to occupy space in the surrounding common marine and coastal area;

(c) The reasonably foreseeable demands for the occupied water space by another type of activity (the greater the demands, the shorter the consent duration); and

(d) Certainty of effects (the less certain the effects the shorter the consent duration).

Explanation:
This policy sets out the main factors to be considered in determining expiry dates for coastal permits, to promote efficient use and allocation of coastal water space.

Security of tenure is important for investment. Larger investments tend to require longer consent durations to get the pay-back (such as profit or recreational benefit) necessary to make the investment worthwhile.

Aligning consent expiry dates for activities in the same area makes it administratively easier to process resource consent renewals and examine efficient allocation.

Coastal water space is a public asset. It is important to balance providing security of tenure with providing the community the opportunity to adjust the allocation to improve outcomes and allowing new users the opportunity to use the space.

Consent duration can be a way of dealing with uncertain effects. The effects may be environmental, economic, social or cultural. For example, if an applicant purports a particular positive effect which has a significant bearing on the granting of resource consent, a short-term consent duration could be used to address any uncertainty about the claims of the positive effect.

4.8.4 Policy – Private use of common marine and coastal area

Recognise activities which provide a net gain in environmental and / or public benefit from persons occupying space in the common marine and coastal area.

Explanation:
The common marine and coastal area is a public resource. This policy recognises activities where they provide an environmental benefit and / or public benefit. These benefits could be in the form of, for example, a coastal occupation charge, financial contribution, contribution of jobs for locals or increased income for the local community region and extends to national benefits.

4.8.5 Policy – Aquaculture

Aquaculture will be provided for in appropriate places in the coastal environment, recognising the relevant considerations may include:

(a) The need for high water quality for aquaculture activities;

(b) The need for land-based facilities associated with marine farming; and

(c) The potential for aquaculture to enhance social, economic and cultural wellbeing of communities within Northland and nationally.

Explanation:
This policy recognises the needs of aquaculture and its benefits. This policy intentionally repeats Policy 8(a) and 8(b) of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 which focusses on the needs and benefits of aquaculture and requires regional policy statements to provide for aquaculture in appropriate places. The list of relevant considerations is purposefully not exhaustive because when considering suitable locations for new aquaculture, it needs to be recognised that different types of aquaculture have different particular environmental and site needs, as well as environmental effects. However, the factors above apply to all types and forms of aquaculture and provide certainty to all stakeholders that aquaculture, in appropriate places, will be provided for in Northland.

4.8.6 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) The relevant regional plan will include provisions to implement Policy 4.8.1 including:

(a) Information requirements for activities requiring a coastal permit to occupy space in the common marine and coastal area;

(b) Objectives, policies and rules that discourage occupation that is inconsistent with Policy 4.8.1; and

(2) The relevant regional plan will establish an allocation method for authorisations for coastal permit applications in zones where demand exceeds the capacity of the zone, and the allocation method has been determined to be the best way to promote the efficient use and allocation of the zone.

(3) The relevant regional plan will require bonds or alternative security for coastal structures where there is an unacceptable risk structures will be abandoned. The bond or alternative security will cover the costs of removing the structure(s) and any other material (for example, oyster shell) associated with the structure(s).

(4) The relevant regional plan will include provisions to implement Policies 4.8.3, 4.8.4 and 4.8.5.

Explanation:
These methods implement the policies by requiring relevant provisions in the Regional Coastal Plan for Northland.

Method 4.8.6(1) will require the Regional Coastal Plan for Northland to specify the information required to assess compliance with Policy 4.8.1 and to discourage those uses / activities that do not meet Policy 4.8.1 including by activity classification (including by prohibited activity status where appropriate).

Methods 4.8.6(2) implements Policy 4.8.2.

Method 4.8.6(3) recognises that the risk of abandonment may be unacceptable and therefore need to be covered by a security. Whether the risk is unacceptable requires an overall judgement, which will include consideration of the consent conditions, management practices, cost of clean-up compared to the value of the structure(s) (including the resource consents), the effects of abandoned structures, and the track record for the same or similar types of structures.

Method 4.8.6(4) requires the relevant regional plan to implement Policies 4.8.3, 4.8.4 and 4.8.5.

5 Policies and methods - Regional form and infrastructure

5.1 Regional form

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 5.1 are:

3.5 Enabling economic wellbeing
3.6 Economic activities – reverse sensitivity and sterilisation
3.7 Regionally significant infrastructure
3.8 Efficient and effective infrastructure
3.11 Regional form

5.1.1 Policy – Planned and coordinated development

Subdivision, use and development should be located, designed and built in a planned and co-ordinated manner which:

(a) Is guided by the 'Regional Form and Development Guidelines' in Appendix 2;

(b) Is guided by the 'Regional Urban Design Guidelines' in Appendix 2 when it is urban in nature;

(c) Recognises and addresses potential cumulative effects of subdivision, use, and development, and is based on sufficient information to allow assessment of the potential long-term effects;

(d) Is integrated with the development, funding, implementation, and operation of transport, energy, water, waste, and other infrastructure;

(e) Should not result in incompatible land uses in close proximity and avoids the potential for reverse sensitivity;

(f) Ensures that plan changes and subdivision to / in a primary production zone, do not materially reduce the potential for soil-based primary production on land with highly versatile soils[10], or if they do, the net public benefit exceeds the reduced potential for soil-based primary production activities; and

(g) Maintains or enhances the sense of place and character of the surrounding environment except where changes are anticipated by approved regional or district council growth strategies and / or district or regional plan provisions.

(h) Is or will be serviced by necessary infrastructure.

Note: in determining the appropriateness of subdivision, use and development (including development in the coastal environment – see next policy), all policies and methods in the Regional Policy Statement must be considered, particularly policies relating to natural character, features and landscapes, heritage, natural hazards, indigenous ecosystems and fresh and coastal water quality.

Explanation:
This policy aims to create a framework for getting the right development in the right place at the right time. It is a strategic and pro-active policy, designed to give effect to section 30(1)(gb) of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), which gives regional councils the function of strategically integrating infrastructure with land use.

[10] Highly versatile soils are Land Use Capability Classes 1c1, 2e1, 2w1, 2w2, 2s1, 3e1, 3e5, 3s1,3s2, 3s4 - as mapped in the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory.

This policy gives effect to Objective 3.11 by ensuring there is a planned and co-ordinated approach to developing the built environment that anticipates and addresses cumulative effects. Well-designed development also provides for the wellbeing of people and communities now and into the future.

5.1.1(f) applies to subdivision and plan changes on land with highly versatile soils in primary production zones. Proponents should clearly demonstrate that the benefits to the public (social, economic, environmental and cultural) arising from subdivision or a plan change and subsequent development are greater than the benefits that would have occurred from productive use of the land. If the public benefits of retaining land with highly versatile soil for primary production activities is equal to or greater than the public benefits that would be gained from a proposed development it is expected that the land in question will remain available for primary production.

Appendix 2 contains the Regional Form and Development Guidelines. They will help new development to achieve sustainable regional form. Some developments will be able to support certain aspects of the guidelines more than others and, in certain situations, some guidelines may need to be traded off against others. This aside, it is important that all guidelines are appropriately considered when councils are managing development.

The Regional Form and Development Guidelines apply to development in urban and rural areas. While it is recognised that some aspects of the guidelines may not be appropriate considerations in a rural setting, the majority of guidelines should be considered when undertaking rural development.

The Regional Urban Design Guidelines are intended to apply to the region's urban[11] areas. However, in some cases developers may benefit from applying portions of the guidelines to rural developments.

It is also critical that infrastructure considerations are effectively integrated with plans for development. There are many advantages of planning in this way including:

- Creating more vibrant communities by recognising the role infrastructure plays in economic, social and cultural wellbeing by ensuring infrastructure is in the right place at the right time;
- Avoiding constraints on the use and development of infrastructure;
- Avoiding costly and untimely / unplanned upgrading of infrastructure; and
- Avoiding adverse environmental effects caused by a lack of infrastructure.

The Regional Urban Design Guidelines in Appendix 2 are adapted from the design qualities described in the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. The guidelines seek to ensure that developments consider the following design elements:

- Context;
- Character;
- Choice;
- Connections;

[11] For the purpose of Regional Form 'urban' means all land zoned for mixed-use, commercial, industrial use and all zones where the primary purpose is residential use.

- Creativity;
- Custodianship; and
- Collaboration.

These guidelines are considered to be important tools to ensure new development is of a high quality and contributes to the identity of the place by providing attractive, user-friendly living environments.

5.1.2 Policy – Development in the coastal environment

Enable people and communities to provide for their wellbeing through appropriate subdivision, use, and development that:

(a) Consolidates urban development[12] within or adjacent to existing coastal settlements and avoids sprawling or sporadic patterns of development;

(b) Ensures sufficient development setbacks from the coastal marine area to;

(i) maintain and enhance public access, open space, and amenity values; and

(ii) allow for natural functioning of coastal processes and ecosystems;

(c) Takes into account the values of adjoining or adjacent land and established activities (both within the coastal marine area and on land);

(d) Ensures adequate infrastructure services will be provided for the development; and

(e) Avoids adverse effects on access to, use and enjoyment of surf breaks of national significance for surfing.

Note: in determining the appropriateness of subdivision, use and development, all policies and methods in the Regional Policy Statement must be considered, particularly policies relating to natural character, features and landscapes, heritage, natural hazards, indigenous ecosystems and fresh and coastal water quality.

Explanation:
Northland's unique coastal environment has a range of landscape, seascape and recreational qualities that make it a popular place for development. Most of our existing settlements are located in the coastal environment and this is also where most development in Northland is occurring. The coastal environment is of huge economic importance to the region (for example, tourism and aquaculture) and our coast is an attribute that sets us apart from other regions. Northland has one of the longest coastlines of any region in the country.

Inappropriate subdivision, use or development can compromise the special values that attract people to our coast and make it less desirable. This policy provides strategic direction for development of the coastal environment, recognising that there is particular pressure for development within this environment and that there are potential effects of development that are distinctive to this sensitive environment. For

[12] For the purpose of Policy 5.1.2 'urban development' means subdivision, land use or development intended for mixed-use, commercial, industrial activities and all development where the primary purpose is residential use, except where it is ancillary to a lawfully established rural activity.

reasons such as these – and to give effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (particularly Policies 4, 6, 7and 16) – managing development in the coastal environment needs particular attention and therefore specific policy direction in the Regional Policy Statement (RPS).

Land use conflicts and adverse cultural and environmental effects (such as deterioration of coastal water quality) will increase if land use planning in the coastal environment does not evolve to keep up with the demand for subdivision and development. Consequently, this policy includes requirements for subdivision and development in the coastal environment over and above the regional guidelines in Appendix 2. Having this policy direction in the RPS will result in less ad-hoc development within the coastal environment and maintain existing amenity values, ensuring that the special qualities of the coastal environment are not degraded.

5.1.3 Policy – Avoiding the adverse effects of new use(s) and development

Avoid the adverse effects, including reverse sensitivity effects of new subdivision, use and development, particularly residential development on the following:

(a) Primary production activities in primary production zones (including within the coastal marine area);

(b) Commercial and industrial activities in commercial and industrial zones;

(c) The operation, maintenance or upgrading of existing or planned[13] regionally significant infrastructure[14]; and

(d) The use and development of regionally significant mineral resources[15].

Explanation:
This policy recognises that there are certain activities and land (zones) that should be protected from the adverse effects of new subdivision, use and development because of their importance to Northland's economy. Essentially, the only impacts that councils can manage are those from incompatible subdivision, development and land use. Consequently, this policy only applies to avoiding the adverse effects of new subdivision and development on already established land uses and activities. In line with Objective 3.6 (viability of important economic activities), avoidance is the appropriate standard because any lesser requirement would not achieve the related objective. This policy gives district councils the flexibility to re-zone primary production land for other uses (like residential) and therefore this policy would not apply to the new zoning.

Land is arguably Northland's most significant economic asset because of the primary production sector (forestry, dairying, horticulture) along with the actual and potential value of mineral and renewable energy resources. Northland only has a finite amount of land. Inappropriately located new residential subdivision and other types of development have the potential to constrain existing productive uses of land. This is widely known as reverse sensitivity.

[13] In this instance, planned means the infrastructure has been identified and provided for in a; notice of requirement designation, resource consent, a regional or district plan, the Northland Regional Land Transport Strategy or a document prepared using the special consultative process under the Local Government Act 2002.
[14] See also Policy 5.3.1.
[15] See also Policy 5.1.4.

5.1.4 Policy – Regionally significant mineral resources

Mineral resources will be considered regionally significant, based on one or more of the following:

(a) Relative scarcity;

(b) Current or potential contribution to the regional economy from the extraction;

(c) Current and potential demand, and location with respect to demand;

(d) Constraints on extraction including existing or planned settlement and access to the site;

(e) Constraints on other development and land use as a result of extraction;

(f) Quality and size of deposit;

(g) Average annual extraction rate of minerals (more than 50,000 tonnes per annum for aggregates)[16]; and

(h) Importance to infrastructure development.

Explanation:
This policy sets out the factors to be considered when determining whether a mineral resource is significant. This is then implemented through Method 5.1.5(2)(a) requiring district plan maps to show regionally significant mineral resources where the existing extraction rates are known or where the mineral resources have been identified and mapped by the regional council (Method 5.1.6).

5.1.5 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) The regional and district councils shall:

(a) Give effect to Policy 5.1.1 (a) and (c)-(g) when developing objectives, policies, and methods / rules for plans and when assessing resource consent applications and plan changes;

(b) Give effect to Policy 5.1.1(b) when considering notices of requirement and resource consent applications in the following centres:

(i) Mangawhai, Dargaville, Waipū, Whāngārei city, Ruakākā / Marsden Point, Pārua Bay, Paihia, Kerikeri / Waipapa, Kaikohe, and Kaitāia;

(c) Give effect to Policy 5.1.1(b) when changing, varying, or replacing regional or district plans;

(d) Give effect to Policies 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 through objectives, policies, and methods / rules in regional and district plans and when assessing resource consent applications ; and

(e) Give effect to Policy 5.1.3 by requiring consultation with relevant infrastructure providers and owners of regionally significant mineral

[16] *Strategies for the uptake and application of airborne geophysical survey data in Northland*. GNS Science, August 2011.

resources when proposed subdivision, land use or development may have an adverse effect on the operation, maintenance or upgrade of regionally significant infrastructure or on the regionally significant mineral resources.

Note: Method 5.1.5(1)(d) and (e) implements regional council obligations under Policy H1 of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation. Therefore, pursuant to Policy H2(b) of that national policy statement, the regional and district councils shall notify a plan change to their plans to give effect to these methods, to the extent that they relate to renewable electricity generation, within 12 months of the Regional Policy Statement becoming operative. Method 5.1.5(1)(d) and (e) also implements regional council obligations under the 2008 National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission.

(2) The district councils shall:

(a) Show regionally significant mineral resources in accordance with Policy 5.1.4,in district plan maps, where the existing extraction rates are known, or once the mineral resources are identified by the regional council;

(b) Consider applying the Regional Urban Design Guidelines in Appendix 2 to resource consent applications and notices of requirement in locations outside of those already identified in Method 5.1.5(1)(b); and

(c) Consider spatially mapping the extent of coastal settlements to give effect to Policy 5.1.2.

(3) *The regional council will identify surf breaks of national significance, and consider identifying surf breaks of regional significance, in the relevant regional plan.*

Explanation:
Method 5.1.5(1)(a) directs the regional and district councils to take into account Policy 5.1.1 (particularly the Regional Form and Development Guidelines in Appendix 2) when developing plan provisions and when assessing resource consent applications and plan changes. It is anticipated that this policy / method package will proactively shape development in Northland by ensuring that the right development occurs in the right place with adequate infrastructure.

Method 5.1.5(1)(b) directs the regional and district councils to implement Policy 5.1.1(b) at the notice of requirement or resource consent stage in certain larger urban areas. The intention of this policy and method package is to improve the form of Northland's built environment.

Method 5.1.5(1)(c) directs the regional and district councils to implement Policy 5.1.1(b) at the plan development stage in all areas of Northland.

Method 5.1.5(1)(d) directs councils to develop plan provisions that give effect to Policy 5.1.2 (coastal environment). There is a degree of flexibility in how future plan provisions may look but they will be required to 'give effect' to Policy 5.1.2. It also directs councils to implement Policy 5.1.3, to ensure that adverse effects (particularly reverse sensitivity effects) of new subdivision, use and development (particularly residential development) are avoided in certain zones. As mentioned in the policy, these zones have been singled out because of their actual and potential contribution to Northland's economy.

Method 5.1.5(1)(e) is in response to concerns that sometimes regionally significant infrastructure providers can be ignored as a potentially adversely affected party. The responsibility for consulting infrastructure providers when a development may affect regionally significant infrastructure lies in the first instance with the applicant. Additionally, where the application is publicly notified, it is anticipated that infrastructure providers will be considered affected parties.

Method 5.1.5(2)(a) will help to ensure that regionally significant mineral resources will not be sterilised by the adverse effects of development such as residential subdivision and development. Once these resources become embedded in planning maps, all users of the district plans will be aware of their locations and will be able to plan future developments accordingly.

Method 5.1.5(2)(b) gives district councils discretion to consider applying the Regional Urban Design Guidelines to resource consent applications outside of those settlements listed in Method 5.1.5(1)(b). They will have discretion on a case-by-case basis to consider applying the guidelines depending on the scale of the development proposed.

Method 5.1.5(2)(c) gives the district councils discretion to consider spatial mapping of the extent of coastal settlements. This should help to determine the 'appropriateness' of development in the coastal environment (allowing councils, developers and the public to easily ascertain whether the new development is within the mapped extent of the coastal settlement or not).

Method 5.1.5(3) recognises Policy 16 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) regarding protection of the surf breaks of national significance that are listed for Northland in the NZCPS and further, the potential for other surf breaks of regional significance to be considered for protection.

5.1.6 Method – Monitoring and information gathering

The regional council will work with relevant stakeholders to identify and map the location of regionally significant mineral resources, applying Policy 5.1.4.

Explanation:
Many existing mineral deposits and extraction activities may be recognised as regionally significant through Policy 5.1.4. Additionally, the mineral survey for Northland (funded by the Ministry for Economic Development, the regional council, and the Far North District Council) provides an indication of where mineral resources are located throughout the region. A clearer picture may emerge in the future that allows us to refine our understanding and map additional mineral resources, based on the criteria in Policy 5.1.4

When identifying regionally significant mineral resources the regional council will collaborate with relevant stakeholders, which may include district councils, iwi, Ministry for Economic Development, owners of mineral resources or other relevant parties.

5.1.7 Method – Non-statutory plans and strategies

The regional and district councils should consider Policy 5.1.1, Policy 5.1.2 and Policy 5.1.3 when developing growth strategies, spatial plans, structure plans and other non-statutory planning documents.

Explanation:
This method of implementation gives the regional and district councils the discretion to decide if they want to consider Policies 5.1.1, 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 when developing non-statutory planning documents.

5.1.8 Method – Advocacy and education

The regional council will promote the inclusion of information about the effects emitting from regionally significant infrastructure and regionally significant mineral resources on Land Information Memorandum reports for neighbouring parcels of land.

Explanation:
The regional council will encourage the district councils to consider including adverse effects arising from regionally significant infrastructure and regional significant mineral resources on land information memorandum reports. This method may not be appropriate in all cases; however, it may be effective where the regionally significant infrastructure or mineral resource is easily identifiable and the effects are known and can be readily quantified. This method implements Policy 5.1.3.

5.2 Effective and efficient infrastructure

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 5.2 are:	
3.8 Efficient and effective infrastructure	*3.11 Regional form*

5.2.1 Policy – Managing the use of resources

Encourage development and activities to efficiently use resources, particularly network resources, water and energy, and promote the reduction and reuse of waste.

Explanation:
This policy provides for the wise use of resources, including infrastructure. It recognises that more efficient use of resources means we can get more value out of resources and the infrastructure that is used to carry those resources. This approach can be applied to both large and small users of resources – indeed the positive effect of smart resource use by large numbers of small consumers (householders) is likely to be significant.

The types of measures that could be promoted include, but are not limited to, effective siting of development to maximise use of resources (such as sunlight or existing wastewater infrastructure) and either providing or future-proofing the ability to harness natural resources (for example, solar energy). Technologies that have the potential to optimise resource consumption such as green roofs, rain gardens, renewable energy technologies, rainwater storage, and grey water recycling techniques can also be promoted. Consideration should be given to appropriate incentives or economic instruments to encourage efficient use of resources.

The Regional Form and Development Guidelines in Appendix 2 contribute to the implementation of this policy.

It also links to inter-regional consideration of resource use and infrastructure.

5.2.2 Policy – Future-proofing infrastructure

Encourage the development of infrastructure that is flexible, resilient, and adaptable to the reasonably foreseeable needs of the community.

Explanation:
The intention of this policy is to ensure long-term consideration is given to the provision of new infrastructure. This policy complements Policy 5.2.1, which encourages wise resource use. Where new infrastructure is needed to satisfy demand, or where existing infrastructure is coming to the end of its life, consideration must be given to the long-term future need and demand for that infrastructure. The benefits of doing this are that it may be cheaper to make small extra capacity allowances at an early stage of development rather than expensive retrofitting if development overtakes infrastructure capacity. Alternatively, a flexible platform could be provided that allows for easy expansion. Efficient planning for infrastructure will also decrease the likelihood of disruption to users from maintenance or upgrading.

5.2.3 Policy – Infrastructure, growth and economic development

Promote the provision of infrastructure as a means to shape, stimulate and direct opportunities for growth and economic development.

Explanation:
This policy is about infrastructure-led growth. It is well recognised that effective growth cannot occur without planning for infrastructure; however, the smart use of infrastructure can actually create opportunities for growth and development. This approach is useful where resources are limited, where there are areas of deprivation and where value can be added to existing activities with the right leverage and investment.

To realise this policy, 'smart' infrastructure provision must be informed by an understanding of where the opportunities for growth lie including any 'trigger points'. Planning for different types of infrastructure can often take place separately. This policy encourages comprehensive planning, tying together the various different plans that include or rely on infrastructure planning to maximise effort.

Again, there is the potential to look inter-regionally as well as within the region for opportunities to improve economic wellbeing.

5.2.4 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

The regional and district councils shall, through regional and district plans, use assessment criteria or other suitable provisions to ensure that when a resource consent application, plan change, or notice of requirement for development is proposed that includes new or upgraded community infrastructure or infrastructure proposed by a network utility operator, weight will be given to the following:

(a) The extent to which infrastructure can be operated, maintained, and upgraded efficiently with minimal adverse effects to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations (for example, to meet change as anticipated by regional / sub-regional growth strategies);

(b) The extent to which the infrastructure uses measures to achieve efficient use of resources;

(c) Where practicable, the potential for infrastructure to co-locate with, or accommodate, other infrastructure to achieve efficiencies; and

(d) Where multiple parties are involved, the extent to which providers propose to work together to co-ordinate activities and / or develop infrastructure implementation plans.

In addition, in conjunction with Method 5.1.5(1)(a), all resource consents, notice of requirements and plan changes should be assessed against the Regional Form and Development Guidelines contained in Appendix 2.

Explanation:
This method encourages the regional and district councils to take future-proofing into account when considering proposals for infrastructure through a criteria-based assessment or other suitable provisions. Infrastructure providers may be able to demonstrate this through their own assessment processes. This should provide a consistent tool to assess infrastructure proposals and give additional weight and

support where this is justified. This should include an explanation of how the infrastructure can be efficiently operated, maintained and upgraded over the longer term to minimise adverse effects and align with future subdivision, use and development. A comprehensive infrastructure implementation or development plan might be the best way to achieve this as part of a master-planning process for larger development. These criteria, however, could also apply to any piece of stand-alone infrastructure – for example, a new road or transmission corridor.

This method supports infrastructure proposals that will use resources efficiently. An example might be the use of secondary aggregates in road construction or recyclable material. Hard infrastructure supplemented by the use of green infrastructure (for example, rain gardens) can also demonstrate an efficient use of resources. Where infrastructure proposals will convey a resource (for example, electricity), providers should be given credit for being able to show how waste is minimised (such as efficient conductors). Co-location is also encouraged where practicable. Additionally, the method references the use of the Regional Form and Development Guidelines (contained in Appendix 2) in supporting the implementation of Policies 5.2.1 and 5.2.2.

5.2.5 Method – Non-statutory plans and strategies

Northland's councils and the Auckland Council should consider, especially in areas where significant growth or decline is occurring or anticipated, working together to:

(a) Understand the long-term growth and economic development opportunities and threats, and the spatial pattern of land use and development, as it is likely to develop over at least a 30-year period;

(b) Develop strategies that support (a), by considering:

(i) What infrastructure is needed to realise, maintain or support growth, or reverse decline, including the anticipated benefits;

(ii) Who is responsible for delivery;

(iii) What will it cost;

(iv) How it can be paid for;

(v) A prioritisation of that infrastructure based on social and economic benefits and costs to the community; and

(vi) A managed reduction in service level where decline is too costly to reverse; and

(c) Support (a) and (b), by co-ordinating and aligning the contents of long-term plans and strategies including:

(i) The Regional Land Transport Strategy;

(ii) Regional and district plans;

(iii) The Long Term Plan (under the Local Government Act 2002);

(iv) Asset management plans; and

(v) Any other relevant strategy or plan.

Explanation:

This method is geared towards encouraging Northland's councils and the Auckland Council to undertake a long-term strategic consideration of economic development and infrastructure including the opportunities to promote growth. It provides a framework to implementing Policy 5.2.3.

The method envisages a three-stage process. Firstly, the regional and district councils should work together to compile a picture of where economic development and population changes are likely to take place over the next 30 years. This could be undertaken on a sector basis (by industry) and geographical basis. This should be seen in the context of long-term opportunities and threats that Northland may face.

Secondly, the regional and district councils should develop an inventory of infrastructure needed to realise these opportunities, including prioritising infrastructure based on overall benefit. Thirdly, plans and strategies that include infrastructure planning should be co-ordinated to achieve infrastructure priorities.

5.2.6 Method – Advocacy and education

The regional and district councils should consider:

(a) Educational measures to bring about voluntary changes to consumer behaviour to promote more sustainable resource use in new and existing development. Such measures may include promoting the efficient use of energy and water and the reduction and reuse of waste in urban design, buildings, and activities. Consideration should also be given to the promotion of measures that optimise the use and efficiency of different transport modes; and

(b) Advocacy measures through setting a voluntary target for levels of resource efficiency in development.

Explanation:
This method in conjunction with Policy 4.3.4 (Water Harvesting, Storage and Conservation) and Method 4.3.6 promotes the efficient use of water.

The types of measures that could be promoted include, but are not limited to, effective siting of development to maximise use of natural resources (such as sunlight) and either providing or future-proofing the ability to harness natural resources (for example, solar energy).

Technologies that have the potential to optimise resource consumption such as green roofs, rain gardens, renewable energy technologies, rainwater storage, and grey water recycling techniques can also be promoted.

The regional and district councils could also consider measures to promote different travel options. This could include promotion of the bus network, car sharing schemes, green travel planning and walking and cycling initiatives. The voluntary targets for resource efficiency could be based on established programmes with assessment criteria, such as HomeStar[17].

[17] http://www.homestar.org.nz/what-homestar%E2%84%A2 provides a background to this programme.

5.2.7 Method – Funding and assistance

The regional and district councils should consider incentive measures to bring about voluntary changes to consumer behaviour to promote sustainable patterns of resource use in new and existing development. Such measures may promote the efficient use of energy and water and the reduction and reuse of waste in urban design, buildings, and activities.

Explanation:
Implementing this method could include incentives such as reduced resource consent fees for schemes that are able to demonstrate that they meet a nationally recognised assessment criteria (such as HomeStar), rebates on development contributions for sustainability measures (such as water tanks), or streamlined consenting processes.

At the other end of the scale, interest free loans or grants to encourage clean and efficient heating appliances, housing insulation and solar heating (in combination with national schemes) could be considered.

5.3 Regionally significant infrastructure

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 5.3 are:

3.7 Regionally significant infrastructure

5.3.1 Policy – Identifying regionally significant infrastructure

The regional and district councils shall recognise the activities identified in Appendix 3 of this document as being regionally significant infrastructure.

Explanation:
The purpose of this policy is to identify regionally significant infrastructure. This will allow:

- Regionally significant infrastructure to be protected from adverse effects, including those caused by new use and development (Policy 5.1.3). Placing controls on incompatible activities locating nearby will allow established regionally significant infrastructure to be effectively maintained, operated and upgraded. Where new regionally significant infrastructure is approved, for example, by way of a resource consent, it will ensure that other activities do not compromise its future construction.

- The benefits of a new proposal to be promoted and weighed against any adverse effects (Policies 5.3.2 and 5.3.3).

In determining the list of regionally significant infrastructure, the following matters have been considered:

- Whether the activity is listed in section 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) as 'infrastructure'.

- The extent of public benefit arising from the activity and the nature of these benefits. Generally these will be direct benefits - for example, network electricity infrastructure supplying a large community, allowing people to meet their energy needs. In certain cases however indirect benefits may be significant - for example, network electricity infrastructure supplying a key industrial site that employs a large number of workers, allowing people in the community to meet their employment needs.

- Cross boundary or cross community impacts. Some activities need to operate over long distances, for example, linear infrastructure such as pipelines, transmission lines and roading corridors. Other activities provide important network 'hubs', for example, ports and airports.

- Direction from national policy statements. Recognising the significance of electricity transmission lines, for example, gives effect to the National Policy Statement Electricity Policy Statement and provides support for its development. Policy 5.1.3 provides support for its secure operation.

- The difficulty of repairing or replacing the facility if it is compromised. Infrastructure can be a large capital investment and the larger and more significant the infrastructure, the longer it will take to repair or replace if its functionality is compromised.

Additionally, although the list in the RMA provides the basis for most regionally significant infrastructure identified in the Regional Policy Statement, it is recognised that because of their benefits, there are some significant social and community facilities that need to be recognised as regionally significant infrastructure. The Marsden Point Oil Refinery has been separately identified given its status as a unique and nationally important facility.

5.3.2 Policy – Benefits of regionally significant infrastructure

Particular regard shall be had to the significant social, economic, and cultural benefits of regionally significant infrastructure when considering and determining resource consent applications or notices of requirement for regionally significant infrastructure.

Explanation:
The intent of this policy is to assist regionally significant infrastructure when it comes to the overall judgement to be made in terms of section 5 of the Resource Management Act 1991(RMA), during the resource consent process, by providing clear recognition of the social, economic, and cultural benefits of regionally significant infrastructure.

5.3.3 Policy – Managing adverse effects arising from regionally significant infrastructure

(1) Allow adverse effects arising from the establishment and operation of new regionally significant infrastructure and the re-consenting of existing operations where:

- *(a) The proposal is consistent with Policies 4.4.1(1), 4.4.1(2). 4.6.1(1)(a), 4.6.1(1)(b), 4.6.1(2) and 4.6.2 (1);*
- *(b) The proposal does not result in established water quality limits or environmental flows and / or levels being exceeded or otherwise could lead to the over-allocation of a catchment (refer to Policy 4.1.1);*
- *(c) Damage to and / or loss of the relationship of iwi with ancestral sites, sites of significance, wāhi tapu, customary activities and / or taonga is avoided or otherwise agreed to by the affected iwi or hapū; and*
- *(d) In addition to the matters outlined in 1) (a) – (c) above, other adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated to the extent that they are no more than minor.*

(2) Allow adverse effects arising from the maintenance and upgrading of established regionally significant infrastructure wherever it is located, where:

- *(a) The adverse effects whilst the maintenance or upgrading is being undertaken are not significant; and*
- *(b) The adverse effects after the conclusion of the maintenance or upgrading are the same or similar to before the activity being undertaken.*

(3) When managing the adverse effects of regionally significant infrastructure decision makers will give weight to:

(a) *The benefits of the activity in terms of Policy 5.3.2;*

(b) *Whether the activity must be recognised and provided for as directed by a national policy statement;*

(c) *Any constraints that limit the design and location of the activity, including any alternatives that have been considered which have proven to be impractical, or have greater adverse effects;*

(d) *Whether the proposal is for regionally significant infrastructure which is included in Schedule 1 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act as a lifeline utility and meets the reasonably foreseeable needs of Northland.*

(e) *The extent to which the adverse effects of the activity can be practicably reduced. Such an assessment shall also take into account appropriate measures, when offered, to provide positive effects, either within the subject site or elsewhere provided that the positive effects accrue to the community of interest and / or resource affected; and*

(f) *Whether a monitoring programme for any identified significant adverse effects with unknown or uncertain outcomes could be included as a condition of consent and an adaptive management regime (including modification to the consented activity) is used to respond to such effects.*

(g) *Whether the infrastructure proposal helps to achieve consolidated development and efficient use of land.*

Explanation:
This policy provides more certainty to proposals for regionally significant infrastructure. It is designed to be flexible and recognises the trade-offs and adaptions that could be made along with practical restrictions that often accompany planning for infrastructure. It will assist regionally significant infrastructure when it comes to the overall judgement to be made in terms of section 5 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), for example, the determination of resource consents under RMA section 104, and plan development. Policy 5.3.3 takes into account the decision of the supreme court in King Salmon (*Environmental Defence Society Inc v The New Zealand King Salmon Co Ltd* [2014] NZSC 38).

The first part of the policy deals with proposals that are consistent with policy addressing important resources elsewhere in the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) or adverse effects on matters of national importance, and where there are minor adverse effects on other matters. Often the establishment of regionally significant infrastructure will have some minor adverse effects which may not be able to be fully avoided or internalised. Additionally, once established, regionally significant infrastructure has an ongoing need to operate, including the use of any resources necessary to allow that asset to function. It is appropriate therefore to provide for these proposals in a straightforward manner, allowing any minor adverse effects where they remain, where otherwise consistent with policy addressing important resources elsewhere in the RPS or adverse effects on matters of national importance.

The second part of the policy supports maintenance and upgrading activities by recognising that these are important to the ongoing resilience of regionally significant infrastructure, for example, by improving its ability to function. It also recognises that

despite efforts to avoid or internalise adverse effects, some may remain through the duration of the activity, although often adverse effects will be the same or similar to the existing baseline once the work is concluded. It is appropriate therefore to provide for these proposals in a straightforward manner wherever they are located.

The third part of the policy provides particular guidance on matters to be considered when assessing proposals or developing plan provisions for regionally significant infrastructure.. This includes consideration of the practical restrictions faced by regionally significant infrastructure, which should include recognition of route or site selection processes undertaken by infrastructure providers to minimise adverse effects. Consideration of positive effects could include instances where the offsetting of adverse effects is proposed (such as biodiversity offsets).

5.3.4 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

The regional and district councils, through regional and district plans, shall include provisions (objectives, policies, rules and other methods) which:

a) Implement Policies 5.3.1, 5.3.2 and 5.3.3; and

b) Reduce constraints on the operation, maintenance and upgrading of regionally significant infrastructure by appropriately using regionally or nationally accepted performance standards.

Explanation:
Method 5.3.4(a) – The regional and district councils need to ensure they incorporate the approach of Policies 5.3.1, 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 into regional and district plans to provide a consistent approach for regionally significant infrastructure. This should include consideration of Policy 6.1.1(f) in this Regional Policy Statement.

Method 5.3.4(b) – These activities can have minimal or very short-term and reversible adverse effects. In these circumstances councils should look at ways to reduce regulatory constraints on these matters through the use of performance standards in plans. Performance standards should, for example, have proven effectiveness or have broad acceptance from council and industry bodies. Where no performance standards exist, councils should consider other ways of reducing constraints (refer to Method 5.3.4(a) above and Policy 6.1.1(f)).

5.3.5 Method – Monitoring and information gathering

The regional council will work with relevant stakeholders to:

(a) Maintain a record of regionally significant infrastructure and contact details (where publicly available or permission obtained) and make it freely available; and

(b) Identify and, where appropriate, map the location of regionally significant infrastructure.

Explanation:
Method 5.3.5(a) – This method seeks to record all regionally significant infrastructure and can be added to over time. Maintaining a record of regionally significant infrastructure will enable consent authorities and applicants to have a ‘one stop

shop'. This will help ensure that adverse effects on regionally significant infrastructure are not inadvertently missed when considering a development proposal. It will also help ensure that the adverse effects of that piece of infrastructure are also considered. The record will be based upon Appendix 3.

Method 5.3.5(b) – District councils must include the electricity transmission grid in district planning maps, consistent with Policy 12 of the National Policy Statement Electricity Transmission. There may be value in including other regionally significant infrastructure on district and regional planning maps; however, there is a risk that they could change quite a bit within 10 years (the life of plans) and soon become outdated. If this approach is taken, it is likely to be limited to the type of infrastructure that is unlikely to change over 10 years (for example, energy generation facilities).

5.4 Renewable energy

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 5.4 are:

3.9 Security of energy supply

5.4.1 Policy – Recognising and providing for the benefits of renewable electricity generation activities and supporting the sustainable use and development of Northland's renewable energy resources.

Recognise and provide for the national significance of renewable electricity generation activities, including the national, regional and local benefits and support the sustainable use and development of Northland's renewable energy resources.

Explanation:
This policy gives effect to the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation, which requires us to recognise and provide for the national significance of renewable electricity generation activities including their national, regional and local benefits. Councils must do this by providing for the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of renewable electricity generation activities. This policy also gives effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement by enabling recognition that the coastal environment contains renewable energy resources of significant value.

The benefits of renewable electricity include maintaining or increasing security of electricity supply at local, regional and national levels by diversifying the type and / or location of electricity generation. There are, however, a range of practical constraints associated with renewable electricity generation activities that decision-makers are required to have particular regard to including the need to locate the activity where the resource is available.

The region has good quality undeveloped renewable energy resources that can be used to generate electricity. The policy promotes a clear recognition of what Northland's renewable energy resources are and the development of renewable electricity generation activities using that resource (allowing for any ongoing operation and upgrading needed to sustain generation).

Renewable electricity generation activities can include hydro, wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, tidal and wave sources. Northland already has important existing renewable electricity generation at the Ngāwhā geothermal power station and the Wairua Falls hydro-electric power station.

There is also potential in the region for the direct use of renewable resources for heat (from biomass and geothermal resources). Direct use of renewable resources reduces demand on traditional electricity generation sources.

5.4.2 Policy – Community and small-scale renewable electricity generation activities.

Encourage and provide for the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of community and small-scale distributed renewable electricity generation activities.

Explanation:
Policy 5.4.2 specifically gives effect to the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation by providing for small and community-scale renewable electricity generation activities. The development of small and community-scale distributed renewable electricity generation results in a range of benefits and positive effects and can give Northland communities an opportunity to become self-reliant (at least in part) for energy supply.

5.4.3 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) The regional and district councils shall, through regional and district plans, include objectives, policies and methods (including rules) to:

(a) Encourage and provide for activities associated with the investigation, identification and assessment of potential sites and energy resources for renewable electricity generation by recognising the reversibility of any adverse effects and making the activity as permissible as possible where adverse effects are not significant;

(b) Recognise the practical implications of restrictions on existing renewable generation activities to upgrade and maintain generation output where there are no significant environmental effects;

(c) Have particular regard to the requirements of renewable electricity generation activities including the need to locate where the resource exists and the practical constraints of developing, operating, maintaining and upgrading generation facilities;

(d) Have particular regard to the associated renewable electricity generation requirements, including any technical limitations, for supporting infrastructure, such as transmission lines, to enable connection to the grid;

(e) Have particular regard to the use of adaptive management techniques and have regard to proposals to appropriately offset adverse effects;

(f) Encourage and provide for the development of community and small-scale renewable electricity generation activities;

(g) Consider permitted activity status for domestic and micro-scale generation; and

(h) In determining the resource consent activity status of renewable electricity activities, have regard to relevant industry code of practice and the opportunity to use performance standards.

(2) The regional and district councils shall, through regional and district plans, recognise renewable energy resources as they may exist in the district / region. Such an approach may include, if appropriate, recognition of any natural features (for example, ridgelines) that could be used for renewable electricity

generation. Recognition of natural features in this way may be generic in nature. Such an approach should:

(a) Be identified in collaboration with stakeholders; and

(b) Be informed where possible by relevant regional and district strategies; and may

(c) Be informed by a level of technical analysis that identifies the generating potential of the resource.

(3) The regional and district councils shall, through regional and district plans, introduce specific objectives, policies, and methods (including rules) that enable the use and development of these renewable energy resources for renewable electricity generation. Where appropriate, the regional and district councils may include provisions that protect the ability to develop a resource.

(4) The regional and district councils shall, when considering a resource consent or notice of requirement for a renewable electricity generation activity, recognise and provide for the national, regional and local benefits of renewable electricity generation especially where the activity will improve the security of electricity supply in Northland.

Note: This suite of methods implements regional council obligations under Policy H1 of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation. Therefore, pursuant to Policy H2(b) of the policy statement, the regional and district councils shall notify a plan change to their plans to give effect to these methods within 12 months of the Regional Policy Statement becoming operative.

Explanation:
This suite of methods gives effect to the provisions in the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation. It seeks to include provisions for renewable electricity generation activities into regional and district plans.

The approach is designed to be flexible by recognising the variation in renewable electricity potential across Northland and the likely policy provisions required in plans. In determining this, it is important to recognise that a great deal of work has already been done, such as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority's Regional Renewable Energy Assessment and the Northland Energy Forum's strategic plan.

Plans should distinguish between different types and scales of renewable electricity generation and the sensitivity of the receiving environment and adopt an appropriate consent activity status. Larger proposals even in more sensitive environments can also be adequately managed through appropriate activity status. While some small-scale activities can be permitted activities.

5.4.4 Method – Non-statutory plans and strategies

The regional and district councils should co-ordinate, support, and provide for energy security and development and the long-term potential for renewable energy in collaboration with Northland stakeholders.

Explanation:
The regional and district councils should work with stakeholders such as industry groups and users to improve available information on Northland's renewable energy resources including potential locations of generation and the resources and technology that are available. Collaboration could be through participation in stakeholder forums or industry-led initiatives or strategies.

5.4.5 Method – Advocacy and education

The regional and district councils should consider encouraging, through education and advocacy, the use of small and community-scale distributed renewable electricity generation.

Explanation:
This method supports Method 5.4.3 which directs the regional and district councils to include objectives, policies, and methods to encourage and provide for small-scale and community renewable electricity generation.

It encourages the regional and district councils to provide education and advocacy to support the regulatory approach. Such an approach should address energy use across all sectors including residential, commercial, and industrial uses and facilities used by the public sector.

This method could be used in combination with Methods 5.2.6 and 5.2.7 (on promoting resource efficiency).

6 Policies and methods - Efficient and effective planning

6.1 Efficient and effective planning

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 6.1 are:	
3.5 Enabling economic wellbeing	*3.12 Tangata whenua role in decision-making*

6.1.1 Policy – Regional and district plans

Regional and district plans shall:

(a) Only contain regulation if it is the most effective and efficient way of achieving resource management objective(s), taking into account the costs, benefits and risks;

(b) Be as consistent as possible;

(c) Be as simple as possible;

(d) Use or support good management practices;

(e) Minimise compliance costs and enable audited self-management where it is efficient and effective;

(f) Enable the aspects of subdivision, use and development that complies with the Regional Policy Statement; and

(g) Focus on effects and where suitable use performance standards.

Explanation:
This policy emphasises the requirements of the RMA for regional and district plans to give effect to this regional policy statement and sets principles for how that would be achieved. While this policy largely reflects requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) (for example, section 32) and good planning practice, it is appropriate that we reinforce these 'principles' of plan development in the Regional Policy Statement (RPS).

We want Northland to be attractive for business and investment. One way we can help is by making our regional and district plans as 'business friendly' as possible (while still maintaining environmental standards).

While achieving efficient and effective planning involves more than just regulation, having clear policy to achieve better regulation to support appropriate subdivision, use and development (as defined elsewhere in the RPS through the other policies and methods) is a step in the right direction. Having this philosophy or policy at the regional and local level will keep us in step with national drivers of change, reduce cross-boundary issues and enable Northland to be a more competitive and attractive place to live and do business.

Strategies for effective regulation require policies such as this one to start something happening. The policy framework needs to be complemented by institutional capacity and processes for the development of "fit for purpose" regulations (this will need to come through methods in the RPS as well as alternative mechanisms outside of the RMA).

This policy aims to drive efficiency through district and regional plans and the implementation of this RPS. Consistency over like matters is efficient for councils, businesses, developers, communities and individuals. It can lead to smarter shared services, better market certainty and future investment. Ensuring our regulation is effective and not excessively costly is efficient. Monetary constraints increase the imperative for more efficient policy right across local government. Consistency is an obvious way forward where like issues exist.

Adopting or complementing good / best practice through other tools, including: performance standards; codes of practice; audited self-management; and certification or best practical environmental options should avoid regulation becoming out of date, promote ownership of environmental performance and reduce compliance costs.

Enabling subdivision, use and development in regional and district plans can be achieved in a number of ways. Most obviously this is through activity status (for example, permitted or controlled activities), but there are also other tools such as limiting notification of resource consent applications and setting out resource consent application information requirements.

Effects of activities should be the focus of plans. This encourages innovation and avoids unnecessarily restricting uses and developments that are able to meet environmental bottom lines. Performance standards are one tool to achieve this, and provide certainty about what needs to be achieved.

Plans should always try to encourage innovation, and this will be a result if this policy is implemented. There will be times where specific constraints are justified. However, plans should provide the ability to innovate and adapt where possible. They should also recognise restrictions on subdivision, use and development can have effects on economic, social and cultural wellbeing and regard shall be had to this when considering effects on high and outstanding natural character, outstanding natural features, outstanding natural landscapes and historic heritage.

6.1.2 Policy - Precautionary approach

Adopt a precautionary approach towards the effects of climate change and introducing genetically modified organisms to the environment where they are scientifically uncertain, unknown, or little understood, but potentially significantly adverse.

Explanation:
Climate change and the introduction of genetically modified organisms to the environment have a greater potential for significant but scientifically uncertain adverse effects than other natural processes and activities.

Taking a precautionary approach means that where there are threats of significant or irreversible adverse effects, and there is scientific uncertainty as to the extent of those effects, decision-makers shall assume the threat of significant or irreversible effects is a reality. The response should be in proportion to the degree of significance and irreversibility of the threat and the degree of scientific uncertainty.

When adopting a precautionary approach decision-makers may apply the following criteria:

Consideration of the degree of significance or irreversibility:

- the scale of the threat;
- the value of the threatened environment;
- whether the possible adverse effects are able to be managed or contained;
- the level of public concern; and
- whether there is a rational or scientific basis for the concern.

Consideration of the degree of scientific uncertainty:

- what would constitute sufficient evidence;
- the level of scientific uncertainty; and
- the potential to reduce scientific uncertainty.

6.1.3 Policy – Transferring council functions

Transfer and delegate regional and district council functions (as provided by sections 33 and 34 of the Resource Management Act 1991(RMA)) where it would result in increased efficiencies and / or effectiveness in achieving resource management objectives.

Explanation:
Section 33 of the RMA allows regional and district councils to transfer any one or more of their functions, powers or duties to another public authority (including an iwi authority) which is not part of the local council (that is, not a committee within the council structure).

Section 34 of the RMA allows regional and district councils to delegate RMA functions to a council committee.

Many agencies including the regional council, district councils, government departments and agencies, and iwi authorities either are or could be actively involved in resource management. The work of all these bodies should be co-ordinated to provide for efficient and effective resource management and in some areas, delegation and transfer of functions may assist this.

Particular situations where the transfer or delegation of functions should be considered include cross-boundary situations, the same activity requiring resource consent from two or more councils, and where iwi authorities have the will and capacity.

6.1.4 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

The regional and district councils, when reviewing their plans, considering options for plan changes, or replacement of an entire plan, shall:

(a) Demonstrate how Policy 6.1.1 is given effect;

(b) Consider: removing unnecessary regulation; opportunities for streamlined, efficient processes; increasing flexibility, certainty, confidence and consistency; and taking a risk-based approach;

(c) *Consider the benefits, costs and risks of combining planning documents and joint plan changes, in part or in total, including on specific resources or geographical areas;*

(d) *Consider the use of good management practices (including environmental best practice guidelines, and codes of practice); and*

(e) *Consider the use of audited self-management.*

Explanation:
Method 6.1.4(a) ensures Policy 6.1.1 is implemented.

Method 6.1.4(b) encourages plan and policy effectiveness reviews to focus on improving regulation. Conducting systematic reviews of Northland's planning documents against clearly defined policy goals, including consideration of costs and benefits, is fundamental to ensuring that regulations remain up to date, cost effective and fit for purpose. Whether councils are doing five-year, 10-year or rolling reviews, a focus on better regulation should be part of the process.

Once a regional or district council has conducted a review, it should publish reports on the performance of regulation and the performance of the council in applying those regulations, including compliance with regulatory quality measures, section 32 RMA analyses and the achievement of the anticipated results.

Method 6.1.4(c) encourages councils to *consider* joint planning. There are currently seven resource management planning documents in Northland. Prior to embarking on the new Regional Policy Statement (RPS), the regional council analysed the status quo and various combinations of plans. A combination of all the region's plans ('one plan') was found to be the best approach from a pure planning perspective, but that it required political buy-in from all the councils. At that time political buy-in was not possible, and so the regional council embarked on the second best option which was to develop a stand-alone new RPS.

There are however additional options that can be pursued such as joint plan changes, a combined regional plan, and a virtual one plan. There has been renewed discussion of these options around council tables; therefore, this method may have more chance of success than it has had in the past.

Method 6.1.4(d) encourages councils to consider using good practice mechanisms. The use of good practice mechanisms in regional and district plans can help to avoid regulation becoming out of date and provides greater impetus for industry to take responsibility and ownership of their actions and role in resource management.

Method 6.1.4(e) encourages councils to use audited self-management as a way monitoring compliance. Audited self-management can provide greater impetus for industry to take responsibility and ownership of their actions and reduce compliance costs.

6.1.5 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

The regional and district councils should apply Policy 6.1.2 when reviewing their plans or considering options for plan changes and assessing resource consent applications.

Explanation:
Method 6.1.5 implements Policy 6.1.2.

6.1.6 Method – Non-statutory plans and strategies

The regional council will develop a process (including evaluation criteria) for the consideration of requests for the transfer of powers under section 33 and delegation of functions under section 34 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

Explanation:
This method requires the regional council to develop a clear and transparent process for considering requests for transferring powers and delegating functions. It gives those that aspire to have regional council powers or functions a clear understanding of how the regional council will consider their proposal.

7 Policies and methods - Natural hazards

7.1 Development in natural hazard-prone areas

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 7.1 are:

3.13 Natural hazard risk

7.1.1 Policy – General risk management approach

Subdivision, use and development of land will be managed to minimise the risks from natural hazards by:

(a) Seeking to use the best available information, including formal risk management techniques in areas potentially affected by natural hazards;

(b) Minimising any increase in vulnerability due to residual risk;

(c) Aligning with emergency management approaches (especially risk reduction);

(d) Ensuring that natural hazard risk to vehicular access routes and building platforms for proposed new lots is considered when assessing subdivision proposals; and

(e) Exercising a degree of caution that reflects the level of uncertainty as to the likelihood or consequences of a natural hazard event.

Explanation:
This policy is intended to enable the regional and district councils to deal with all natural hazards and areas not explicitly covered in Policies 7.1.2 and 7.1.3.

The policy acknowledges that there are large parts of Northland where natural hazard risk exists[18] but which are not covered by 10-year and 100-year flood hazard areas or coastal hazard. This approach recognises that avoiding risk everywhere is impractical and seeks instead to ensure that development is appropriate to the level of risk faced and the relative vulnerability of different activities.

This policy will enable development to be considered on a site-specific or development-specific, case-by-case basis using standard engineering practices and risk management techniques. These may include:

- ISO 31000: 2009 (Risk Management Standard)
- NZS 9401: 2008 (Managing Flood Risk – A Process Standard)
- NZS 4404: 2010 (Land Development and Subdivision Infrastructure).

The policy also requires decision-makers to exercise a degree of caution that reflects the level of uncertainty with regards to the likelihood or consequences of a natural hazard event. In advance of new flood and coastal hazard areas being identified and mapped, this will help build resilience to the potential impacts of natural hazard events. This is also consistent with Policy 6.1.2.

[18] Refer to Policy 7.1.2 explanation for desription of 10-year and 100-year flood hazard areas.

7.1.2 Policy – New subdivision and land use within 10-year and 100-year flood hazard areas

New subdivision, built development (including wastewater treatment and disposal systems), and land use change may be appropriate within 10-year and 100-year[19] flood hazard areas provided all of the following are met:

(a) Hazardous substances will not be inundated during a 100-year flood event.

(b) Earthworks (other than earthworks associated with flood control works) do not divert flood flow onto neighbouring properties, and within 10-year flood hazard areas do not deplete flood plain storage capacity;

(c) A minimum freeboard above a 100-year flood event of at least 500mm is provided for residential buildings.

(d) Commercial and industrial buildings are constructed so as to not be subject to material damage in a 100 year flood event.

(e) New subdivision plans are able to identify that building platforms will not be subject to inundation and / or material damage (including erosion) in a 100-year flood event;

(f) Within 10-year flood hazard areas, land use or built development is of a type that will not be subject to material damage in a 100-year flood event; and

(g) Flood hazard risk to vehicular access routes for proposed new lots is assessed.

Explanation:
This policy provides the terms and conditions by which new development may occur in identified flood hazard areas[20]. Both the 10-year and 100-year flood hazard areas are addressed. These return periods relate to the annual exceedance probability. The 10-year areas are subject to repeated flooding and present a high risk to life and property because there is at least a 10% chance of flooding occurring every year and they tend to be located around water channels. The 100-year areas are those which would be flooded in a one-in-100-year flood (this equates to a one in 10 chance in a 10 year period) and as such, the chance of flooding is lower in these locations but the extent of these flood areas is larger than 10-year flood hazard areas.

In Policy 7.1.2(a) hazardous substances are those covered by the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. This does not include common household items.

In the 10-year areas, flood depths in 100-year events can be very deep with significant flow velocity, meaning the risks are very high. Most types of built development in the 10-year flood hazard areas are therefore not sustainable due to repeated risk to life, health and property from both floodwater and debris. This is why new built development is required to be of a type that will not be subject to material damage in a 100-year flood event.

[19] All references to 100-year floods include an allowance for the effects of climate change.
[20] Note that policy 7.1.5 refers to locating new regionally significant and critical infrastruture within flood and coastal hazard areas.

Whether “material” damage will occur to land or a structure is likely to require consideration of the circumstances of the subject land – such as what the proposed use of the land is or is likely to be in the future (as a direct result of the proposal) and the nature of the hazard. In the context of buildings or structures, damage which would affect the structural integrity of the building is likely to be regarded as material. If the building or significant parts of it were rendered unusable by the damage or could not be safely used for its intended purpose, then such damage would be material.

This policy provides flexibility for new subdivision, within flood hazard areas by allowing applicants to demonstrate that building platforms will not be subject to material damage in a 100-year flood event (for example, through an engineer's report (see method 7.1.7(4)). Flood hazard risk to vehicular access routes for new lots is also required to be assessed at the subdivision stage. This will also help district councils determine (under section 106 of the Resource Management Act 1991) whether the land for which consent is sought is suitable for subdivision or whether the hazard risk is too great and the consent should be refused or modified.

Locating new residential, commercial and industrial buildings in 100-year flood hazard areas may be considered appropriate, provided an appropriate level of mitigation is achieved (for example, by minimum freeboard requirements as per NZ Standard 4404: 2010). This mitigation also requires that hazardous substances (such as fuels and pesticides) are not located where they would be inundated during a 100-year flood event. The policy also seeks to prevent worsening of the flood hazard as a result of earthworks, which reduce flood storage, impede flow paths or divert floodwater into neighbouring properties.

7.1.3 Policy – New subdivision, use and development within areas potentially affected by coastal hazards (including high risk coastal hazard areas)

Within areas potentially affected by coastal hazards over the next 100 years (including high risk coastal hazard areas), the hazard risk associated with new use and development will be managed so that:

(a) Redevelopment or changes in land use that reduce the risk of adverse effects from coastal hazards are encouraged;

(b) Subdivision plans are able to identify that building platforms are located outside high risk coastal hazard areas and these building platforms will not be subject to inundation and / or material damage (including erosion) over a 100-year timeframe;

(c) Coastal hazard risk to vehicular access routes for proposed new lots is assessed;

(d) Any use or development does not increase the risk of social, environmental or economic harm (from coastal hazards);

(e) Infrastructure should be located away from areas of coastal hazard risk but if located within these areas, it should be designed to maintain its integrity and function during a hazard event;

(f) The use of hard protection structures is discouraged and the use of alternatives to them promoted; and

(g) Mechanisms are in place for the safe storage of hazardous substances.

Explanation:
Coastal hazards result from the interaction of natural coastal processes with human activities and structures. Coastal hazards can adversely affect the health, wellbeing and safety of people and communities, as well as the local economy. Northland has one of the longest coastlines in the country and a high proportion of our developed areas are within the coastal environment. Locating new development too close to the coast runs the risk of it being adversely affected by coastal hazards such as erosion or inundation by storm surges or tsunami events.

The overall intent of this policy is to give effect to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) by enabling people to provide for their social and economic wellbeing through appropriate subdivision, use and development within areas potentially affected by coastal hazards.

When implementing this policy, areas potentially affected by coastal hazards should be taken to include:

- Existing coastal hazard 2 areas in district plans; and
- Areas where there is potential for harm to people or damage to property as a result of coastal inundation (including coastal storm surge and wave run-up and tsunami inundation) or erosion by wave action or currents over a 100-year timeframe.

High risk coastal hazard areas are those locations that have been assessed at high or extreme risk from the effects of coastal hazards over a planning horizon of 50 years. These areas are currently identified as coastal hazard 1 areas in district plans.

As required by the NZCPS, this policy seeks to ensure new use or development in areas potentially affected by coastal hazards will not increase the risk of social and economic loss or harm.

In high risk coastal hazard areas, the preferred long-term approach is to move from mitigation to discouraging future development. This is why the policy ensures that new subdivision plans are able to identify that building platforms are located outside high risk areas.

Outside of high risk areas, this policy seeks to ensure new subdivision plans can identify that building platforms will not be subject to inundation and or material damage over a 100-year timeframe. This is to mitigate the damage to buildings from a 1% Annual Exceedance Probability event (storm or tsunami) as well as 100-year incremental coastline change due to erosion.

This policy also encourages redevelopment or changes in land use that can reduce the risks of adverse effects from coastal hazards. This could be achieved through a combination of reducing the likelihood of damage and / or reducing the consequences of a hazard event. The policy also directs that infrastructure should be located away from coastal hazard areas where practicable. However, it recognises that there is a functional need for some infrastructure to be located within

hazard areas (such as to service communities). When this occurs, the infrastructure should be designed to maintain its integrity during a hazard event so that its ability to service communities will not be compromised.

7.1.4 Policy – Existing development in known hazard-prone areas

In 10-year and 100-year flood hazard areas and coastal hazard areas, mitigation measures to reduce natural hazard risk to existing development will be encouraged. These may include one or more of the following:

(a) Designing for relocatable or recoverable structures (when changing existing buildings);

(b) Providing for low or no risk activities within hazard-prone areas;

(c) Providing for setbacks (from rivers / streams or the coastal marine area);

(d) Managed retreat by relocation, removal, or abandonment of structures;

(e) Replacing or modifying existing development without resorting to hard protection structures (see Policy 7.2.2); or

(f) Protecting, restoring or enhancing natural defences against natural hazards (see Policy 7.2.1).

Explanation:
This policy acknowledges that existing development has already occurred within known hazard-prone areas and that the risk to people and property from natural hazard events should be reduced to provide for community safety and wellbeing. This policy describes the types of activities that may help prevent or reduce the risk from hazards, which will help to build community resilience to hazard events.

The policy directly gives effect to Policy 25 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, which seeks to avoid re-development or change in land use that would increase the risk of adverse effects from coastal hazards. It also encourages re-development or changes in land use that would reduce the risk of adverse effects from coastal hazards, including managed retreat and designing for relocation from hazard events. It is considered that these principles are sound and can be applied to all land which is prone to flood hazards within Northland – not just land subject to coastal hazards.

7.1.5 Policy – Regionally significant infrastructure and critical infrastructure

New regionally significant infrastructure and critical infrastructure:

(1) Must be designed to maintain, as far as practicable, its integrity and function during natural hazard events; and

(2) May be considered appropriate to locate within flood and coastal hazard areas, even if it cannot meet policies 7.1.2 or 7.1.3 provided:

(a) There is a need to be located within the flood hazard and / or coastal hazard area; and

(b) infrastructure providers have demonstrated that the proposed location within the hazard area is the most appropriate (taking into account

social, cultural, and economic costs and benefits) to service the needs of the community; and

(c) (An engineer's assessment identifies the potential for the infrastructure to exacerbate flood and erosion hazard risk on neighbouring properties, and where the assessment shows that risk will be exacerbated; the assessment must outline ways this risk can be minimised.

Explanation:
Although there are overlaps between what constitutes critical infrastructure and what constitutes regionally significant infrastructure, there are differences. The definition of regionally significant infrastructure encompasses a broader range of facilities, including some that do not meet the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act definition of critical infrastructure (they are not necessarily deemed as being vital to maintain in the event of a natural hazard). The full range of infrastructure should be included here however because of its overall importance for the long-term economic and social wellbeing of Northland.

This policy seeks to ensure that new regionally significant infrastructure and critical infrastructure is designed to maintain its integrity and function during a natural hazard event. This is because this type of infrastructure is often essential to the social and economic wellbeing of communities and so its ability to service communities should not be compromised.

This policy seeks to ensure that this infrastructure is not located in areas subject to significant natural hazard risk – that is, in 10-year and 100-year flood hazard areas and within coastal hazard areas. However, the policy also recognises that in some circumstances, such infrastructure can be located within flood and coastal hazard areas, even if it cannot meet all relevant provisions of the associated policies (such as location of existing related infrastructure, availability of land, economic factors or engineering problems). In these instances, infrastructure providers will need to demonstrate that there is a need for the infrastructure to be located within the hazard area and that the proposed location is the most appropriate to service the community's needs.

Additionally, when such infrastructure is proposed to be located in a hazard area, an assessment must be made to identify the potential for the development to exacerbate flood and erosion hazard risk on neighbouring properties (for example, an assessment of the potential of the development to divert flood flow onto neighbouring properties). This should ensure that any increase in risk to neighbouring properties is minimised.

This policy applies to new regionally significant and critical infrastructure – it does not apply to any upgrades and / or maintenance of existing regionally significant and critical infrastructure.

7.1.6 Policy – Climate change and development

When managing subdivision, use and development in Northland, climate change effects will be included in all estimates of natural hazard risk, taking into account the scale and type of the proposed development and using the latest national

guidance and best available information on the likely effects of climate change on the region or district.

Explanation:
Scientists predict that the expected impacts of climate change will include rising temperatures, sea-level rise, changing rainfall patterns and increased storminess. Climate change is projected to have a significant impact on the risk profile of natural hazards by changing some of the hazard drivers (for example, sea level rise may lead to greater coastal erosion and / or inundation and an increase in high intensity, short duration rain events could lead to more flash floods).

Preparing for climate change now and recognising its potential influence on natural hazard events will help ensure that our communities can continue to provide for their social, cultural and economic wellbeing and become more resilient to the effects of a changing climate. Adapting now will help ensure our economy and infrastructure remains viable and that Northland is less vulnerable to the costs and adverse impacts of a changing climate. The requirement to take into account national guidance and the best available information on the likely effects of climate change on the region or district will ensure that when national guidance is updated / modified, this information will be used rather than relying on a specific requirement / figure that could quickly become out-dated.

7.1.7 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) The district councils shall notify a plan change to incorporate finalised flood hazard maps into district plans in the first relevant plan change following the operative date of the Regional Policy Statement or within two years of the Regional Policy Statement becoming operative, whichever is earlier. Additionally, the district councils shall incorporate new flood and coastal hazard maps into district plans as soon as practicable after such areas have been investigated, defined and mapped by the regional council.

(2) In their respective plans, the regional and district councils shall provide objectives, policies, and methods (including rules)to give effect to Policies 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.1.4, 7.1.5 and 7.1.6.

(3) District councils shall set out rules in district plans classifying the following as prohibited or non-complying activities:

- *(a) New subdivision proposals that do not comply with policies 7.1.2 and 7.1.3; and*
- *(b) New proposals that do not comply with policy 7.1.2(f).*

(4) The regional and district councils shall require an engineer's assessment for new subdivision within 10-year and 100-year flood and coastal hazard areas and for new land use or built development within 10-year flood hazard areas and high risk coastal hazard areas.

(5) The regional and district councils shall ensure that within the coastal environment:

- *(a) Any new habitable dwelling has a minimum floor level of 3.3m above One Tree Point datum on the east coast and 4.3m above One Tree Point*

Datum on the west coast. New non-habitable buildings will have a minimum floor level of 3.1m above One Tree Point datum on the east coast and 4.1m on the west coast; and

(b) An additional allowance for wave run-up [21]shall be assessed over and above the requirements above for exposed east coast locations where ground elevation is less than 5m above One Tree Point datum, and for exposed west coast locations where ground elevation is less than 6m above One Tree Point datum.

(c) Clauses (a) and (b) do not apply to:

i) Non-habitable buildings not designed for habitation or commercial use and where the potential impact of the building being materially damaged or destroyed by a coastal hazard event (including the replacement cost) is minor (e.g. pump sheds, car ports, farm sheds and public toilets); and

ii) Non-habitable buildings that have a functional need to be located in the coastal marine area (e.g. boatsheds); and

iii) Network utility infrastructure.

Circumstances where (a) and (b) are not met will be subject to the resource consent process.

(6) Before any new areas are zoned or identified in a district plan in ways that enable intensification of use, district councils shall ensure that the risks of natural hazards are assessed.

(7) The regional and district councils, when setting out objectives, policies, and methods in regional and district plans, and when assessing resource consent applications, will take into account the latest national guidance and the best available information on the effects of climate change on natural hazards for sea-level rise, drought and storm rainfall intensity.

(8) Where buildings occupied by people, animals and / or hazardous substances in 10-year flood areas and high risk coastal hazard areas have been materially damaged or destroyed by a natural hazard event, the regional council (through the relevant regional plan) will require land use consent for the repair or reconstruction of the building. The regional council will limit its discretion in determining the land use consent to avoiding or mitigating natural hazards.

Explanations:

Method 7.1.7(1) directs the district councils to notify a plan change to incorporate finalised flood hazard maps into district plans within two years of this Regional Policy Statement (RPS) becoming operative. This will be crucial to building community resilience to the risks and impacts of natural hazard events. Additionally, they will be required to incorporate new flood and coastal hazard maps into district plans as soon as practicable after these areas have been defined and mapped by the regional council.

The method differentiates between finalised flood hazard maps and new flood and coastal hazard maps because the regional council has prioritised the process of flood hazard mapping, focusing first on 26 catchments identified as having the highest potential flood risk to life, property, infrastructure and assets. Maps for these 'priority'

[21] The extra height that broken waves reach as they run up the beach and adjacent coastal barrier until the wave energy is expended by friction and gravity.

areas have been produced in consultation with local river liaison committees and local residents, using detailed survey data, hydrology assessments and computer modelling to determine the likely extent of flooding. It is important that these maps are incorporated into district plans at the first available opportunity.

The regional council will support the district councils when implementing this method through providing technical support and advice. The district councils also need to know that the regional council can stand behind the hazard maps they have produced and have confidence that the maps will be as technically sound as possible.

Method 7.1.7(2) directs the regional and district councils to include provisions in their respective plans to give effect to Policies 7.1.1 to 7.1.6. This primarily means mitigating the adverse effects of new subdivision and development in flood hazard areas and coastal hazard areas – the most 'at risk' areas within Northland from natural hazards. It also means directing regionally significant infrastructure and critical infrastructure away from areas most at risk to natural hazards unless there are no reasonable alternative locations.

Method 7.1.7(3) requires the district councils to classify new subdivision, use and development in flood and coastal hazard areas that is likely to result in significant risk to life and property as 'prohibited' or 'non-complying' activities in district plans. The presumption is that if applicants can demonstrate compliance with the policy provisions, natural hazard risk should be avoided by appropriate design. If they cannot, the development should not proceed.

Method 7.1.7(4) sets out that the regional and district councils must require an engineer's assessment for new subdivision within 10-year and 100-year flood and coastal hazard areas. It will also require an engineer's assessment for new land use or built development within 10-year flood hazard areas and high risk coastal hazard areas.

This will help district councils determine (under section 106 of the Resource Management Act (RMA)) whether the land is suitable for subdivision and the requirement for an engineer's report, for new land use and built development (within 10-year flood hazard areas and high risk coastal hazard areas), will ensure that the development is suitable and will not increase the risk of harm to neighbouring properties.

Method 7.1.7(5) implements Policies 7.1.3 and 7.1.6 by requiring the regional and district councils to include provisions in their relevant plans to ensure a consistent, region-wide approach is adopted to setting minimum floor levels in the coastal environment for habitable dwellings and non-habitable buildings. Additionally, in recognition of their function and/or the potential low impact of some non-habitable buildings being damaged or destroyed by coastal hazard events, this method outlines that certain non-habitable buildings shall be excluded from these requirements.

These minimum floor levels are based on an analysis of sea level data recorded at east coast and west coast sites in Northland. The assessed 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) storm- tide level above One Tree Point (OTP) datum is 1.8m for the east coast and 2.8m for the west coast. Additionally, these minimum floor levels incorporate:

i) a projection for sea-level rise of 1 metre by 2115, and

ii) the relevant freeboard (0.3 or 0.5 m) stipulated in New Zealand Standard 4404:2010 Land Development and Subdivision Infrastructure which covers uncertainty in the 1% AEP storm-tide level, run-up or overtopping from small waves in areas not deemed to be exposed open-cost areas, and wash from moving vehicles.

The 1 metre sea-level rise by 2115 is consistent with the sea-level projections of the 2013 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th Assessment Report. It is the equivalent to the threshold of 0.8 metres by the 2090s that should at least be considered from the 2008 Ministry for the Environment *Guidance Manual for Local Government: Coastal Hazards and Climate Change*. The 1 metre sea-level rise allowance also covers any small increase in storminess leading to somewhat higher storm surges, and takes into account national guidance and best available information. It does not include any provision for a rise in sea level of an additional several decimetres if the ice-sheets collapse faster than anticipated, as set out in the IPCC 5th Assessment Report.

The appropriate sea-level rise allowance should be reviewed regularly at no longer than 10 year intervals, taking into account national guidance and the best available information on the likely effects of climate change on the Northland region.

How minimum floor levels have been derived:

	East coast	West coast
Assessed 1% AEP sea level	1.8m OTP	2.8m OTP
Allowance for Sea Level Rise (to 2115)	1.0 m	1.0 m
Freeboard (habitable dwellings)	0.5m	0.5m
Freeboard (non-habitable buildings)	0.3m	0.3m

The regional and district councils are also required to ensure that an additional allowance for wave run-up is considered in exposed open east coast locations where ground elevation is less than 5m OTP datum and exposed west coast locations where ground elevation is less than 6m OTP datum. Wave run-up at any coastal locality is quite site-specific, depending on factors such as beach slope, roughness of the beach (sand, gravel or large rocks), wave height, exposure to ocean swell, how close waves can penetrate before breaking and the characteristics of the land above the beach – for example, dunes, cliffs, seawalls, rock revetments, low-lying land or estuarine margins.

Setting minimum floor levels in the coastal environment will ensure that new buildings will be more resilient to coastal hazard events and will give effect to Policy 25 of the NZCPS, which requires councils to avoid increasing the risk of social, environmental and economic harm from coastal hazards, using at least a 100 year planning horizon.

As these are minimum floor levels, the district councils should consider requiring higher minimum floor levels in specific locations if justified including in situations where impacts are likely to have high consequences or where additional future adaptation options are limited**.** Conversely, if applicants have site specific information/reasons why they consider that these minimum floor level requirements should not apply, they will be required to go through the resource consent process and will need to demonstrate how their development will avoid increasing the risk of social, environmental and economic harm from coastal hazards.

Method 7.1.7(6) implements Policy 7.1.1 by ensuring that natural hazard risk is assessed before areas are re-zoned in ways that enable intensification of use (for example, re-zoning from countryside to residential). This should help ensure that natural hazard risk is minimised and help build community resilience to natural hazard events.

Method 7.1.7(7) requires the regional and district councils to take into account the latest national guidance and best available information on the effects of climate change on natural hazards. The intention of this method is to build resilience to the effects of natural hazards by fully understanding (or as much as possible) the potential influence of climate change on natural hazards. Factoring in climate change 'upfront' is easier than retrofitting development or having to 'mitigate' the effects of events after they have occurred.

Method 7.1.7(8) implements Policies 7.1.2 and 7.1.3. As existing lawfully established activities have protection under section 10 of the RMA, this causes limitations for how the district councils can manage existing development – especially existing development – in areas most susceptible to hazard risk (10-year flood hazard areas and high risk coastal hazard areas).

Regional councils are not restricted in the same way because section 10 of the RMA does not apply to regional plans. To reduce risks to people, property and the wider environment, this method requires the regional council to assume responsibility for evaluating the hazard risk and ensure that the right risk reduction measures are used when buildings are materially damaged or destroyed within high risk hazard areas. To avoid complications due to this overlap with the district councils, the regional council will investigate transferring its functions back to the relevant district council.

7.1.8 Method – Monitoring and information gathering

(1) The regional council will investigate and define new 10-year and 100-year flood hazard areas and areas potentially affected by coastal hazards over at least the next 100 years, progressively map them, and make this information available to the district councils for inclusion in district plans and anyone else on request.

The regional council, when undertaking its functions under section 30 of the Resource Management Act 1991, will co-ordinate the gathering and collating of research at a regional scale on flooding and coastal hazards (including tsunami) and the effects of climate change on these hazards.

(2) The district councils, when undertaking their functions under section 31 of the Resource Management Act 1991, will co-ordinate the gathering and collating of research on natural hazards and their risks and impacts at a district scale. This shall include landslides, stormwater management and rural fire risk.

(3) The regional council and district councils should work together to collaboratively establish and maintain an integrated natural hazards database for the region.

Explanation:
The first method implements Policies 7.1.2 and 7.1.3. The work that the regional council does around identifying land susceptible to inundation from flooding, as well as inundation and erosion from coastal hazards, is ongoing.

This helps build community resilience and any maps / information developed should be passed on to the district councils (and the wider community) so that the hazard risks can be better managed throughout Northland.

Methods 7.1.8(2) and (3) implement Policy 7.1.1. These methods aim to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the regional and district councils for undertaking research and gathering information on natural hazards. These methods acknowledge that the gathering and collating of research can mean as, and when the councils become aware of new information.

This will help ensure that natural hazard management is undertaken efficiently and effectively throughout Northland.

Method 7.1.8(4) sets out that the regional council and Northland's district councils should work together to establish and maintain a natural hazards database for the region. This will help the public and decision-makers understand the risks associated with natural hazards in our region. It will lead to efficiencies in natural hazard management as all councils would be able to access the data and should reduce duplication and effort in hazard management. This should help build community resilience to the impacts of natural hazard events. The councils should collaboratively work out protocols for gathering hazard data, verifying and recording data and presenting it in an understandable form to the public.

7.1.9 Method – Advocacy and education

(1) The regional council will initiate, co-ordinate and promote activities that assist communities to build resilience to the effects of natural hazards.

(2) The regional and district councils shall raise public awareness of natural hazards, including providing and publicising information on which natural hazards may occur in various locations (including the potential influence of climate change on these hazards) and what people can do to be prepared for hazard events.

(3) The regional and district councils shall, in consultation with affected communities, investigate and initiate methods to reduce the risk to existing development on land prone to natural hazards. This may include but not be limited to:

- *(a) Property acquisition;*
- *(b) Riparian works;*
- *(c) Infrastructure developments or upgrades;*
- *(d) Developing hazard risk reduction strategies;*
- *(e) Use of esplanade reserves and other mechanisms on subdivision to secure setbacks from hazard-prone areas; and*
- *(f) Any other matter identified in Policy 7.1.4.*

Explanation:
These methods primarily implement Policy 7.1.4 but are applicable to the full suite of policies within Part 7.

Methods 7.1.9(1) and (2) are aimed at building community resilience to natural hazard events.

Method 7.1.9 (3) is targeted at reducing the risk to existing development on hazard-prone land. It gives the regional and district councils a degree of flexibility when managing existing risk. It is anticipated that any strategies will be developed in consultation with affected communities.

7.2 General risk reduction policies

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 7.2 are:

3.13 Natural hazard risk

7.2.1 Policy – Role of natural features

Recognise and protect, restore or enhance natural systems and features that contribute to reducing the impacts of natural hazard events on the built environment.

Explanation:
Note, in the coastal environment Policy 26 – *Natural defences against coastal hazards* of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 applies.

Natural features (like sand dunes, beaches, riparian vegetation, floodplains and wetlands) help to avoid and lessen the effects of natural hazard events. For example, coastal dunes help to mitigate the effects of storm surges by acting as natural protection against inundation and erosion, the retention of vegetation cover in upper catchments helps to protect against landslides / land instability, and the protection of wetlands helps to reduce flood risk and river bank erosion.

This policy gives effect to Policy 26 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 – Natural defences against coastal hazards. It requires councils to provide (where appropriate) for the protection of natural features that protect coastal land uses from coastal hazards.

Protecting or restoring natural features often tends to be more economically viable than building and subsequently relying on hard protection structures. This is because engineered approaches have a limited design life and adopting these 'structural' assets can lock in future generations to continued expenditure to maintain, upgrade or replace such protection. In addition, natural features (such as coastal dune systems) often have high levels of natural character, landscape and amenity values, and are central to the protection and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity. Some also contain important archaeological and cultural sites and are of special value to tangata whenua.

This policy is not saying that natural features cannot be developed. Rather, their attributes that contribute to minimising the impacts of natural hazard events should not be compromised by inappropriate development.

7.2.2 Policy – Establishing the need for hard protection structures

Priority will be given to the use of non-structural measures over the use / construction of hard protection structures when managing hazard risk. New hard protection structures may be considered appropriate when:

(a) The level of hazard risk reduction that the proposed structural asset is seeking to achieve is appropriate and cannot reasonably be achieved through non-structural options;

OR

(b) They will provide protection for concentrations of vulnerable existing development and the works form part of a long-term hazard management strategy that represents the best practicable option for the future; and

(c) The financial costs of non-structural measures (compared to the costs of the hard protection structure that will achieve the desired level of hazard risk reduction) are too high for the community; and

(d) It can be demonstrated that the benefits of mitigation outweigh the adverse effects and that the form and location of the hard protection structure is such that any adverse effects on the environment are minimised.

Hard protection structures, when considered necessary to protect private assets, should not be located on public land unless there is significant public or environmental benefit in doing so.

Explanation:
This policy promotes the use of non-structural measures (such as beach renourishment and dune restoration) over reliance on new hard protection structures.

This approach is consistent with Policy 25 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS), which requires councils to discourage hard protection structures and to promote alternatives to them.

While hard protection structures are generally of immediate benefit, they only afford protection up to their design capacity. Reliance on these assets can, over time, increase the consequences of a natural hazard event if the structural measure fails.

This is particularly relevant because climate change is predicted to result in an increase in high intensity short duration storm events, which means that flood events could become larger and more frequent.

Hard protection structures can increase the risk from natural hazards – for example, seawalls can cause localised erosion of the adjacent shoreline. These structures can also cause significant environmental effects and should be considered the least desirable option for natural hazard management. Policy 27(2)(a) of the NZCPS requires councils to 'focus on approaches to risk management that reduce the need for hard protection structures and similar engineering interventions'.

It should be noted that this policy does not say 'no' to hard protection structures, but rather establishes criteria, including looking at long-term costs and benefits, to assist decision-makers to determine when such structures may be considered an appropriate option to mitigate natural hazard risk.

7.2.3 Policy – Protection and maintenance of structural mitigation assets

Impediments to accessing established natural hazard structural mitigation assets for maintenance purposes, and activities that may compromise the integrity or functioning of these assets, will be avoided.

Explanation:
Structural mitigation assets include flood management schemes (for example, stopbanks, spillways and flood gates) and coastal hazard protection (such as seawalls or groynes).

These assets play an important role in minimising the risks to life, property and the environment from natural hazard events. Any unauthorised interference with these assets, or inappropriate activity undertaken on these assets, may compromise their purpose and so increase risks to public safety.

Once these assets have been established (especially for flood management schemes), it is important that new or subsequent development does not hinder councils or contractors accessing these works for ongoing maintenance purposes.

7.2.4 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

(1) When setting out objectives, policies, and methods (including rules) in regional and district plans, the regional and district councils shall recognise the role that natural features play in reducing natural hazard risk and provide for their maintenance, protection, restoration and enhancement.

(2) The regional council will include objectives, policies, and methods in the relevant regional plan(s) to prevent the clearance of indigenous bush on erosion-prone land and the drainage of wetlands and other natural ponding areas, where such activities will increase the risk of flooding to downstream land.

(3) The regional council will include objectives, policies, and methods (including rules) in regional plans to control activities that will dam or divert the natural flow of floodwaters across floodplains (such as stopbanks, bund walls, or artificial levees, filling of land, or siting of structures).

(4) The regional and district councils shall give effect to Policy 7.2.2 through objectives, policies, and methods (including rules) in regional and district plans.

(5) Regional and district plans will implement Policy 7.2.3.

Explanation:
Methods 7.2.4(1) to (3) implement Policy 7.2.1. These methods aim to ensure that natural features are statutorily protected through regional / district plans so that their 'role' in mitigating the impacts / risk from natural hazard events can be maintained. Method 7.2.4(1) gives the regional and district councils a degree of flexibility to generally provide for the maintenance and protection of natural features, whereas methods 7.2.4(2) and (3) are targeted at ensuring that the regional council controls specific activities that can harm / modify natural features and so limit their ability to provide protection from natural hazard events.

For Method 7.2.4(4), hard protection structures can have significant environmental effects and should be considered the least desirable option for natural hazard control, but there are circumstances when they will be appropriate. This method directs the regional and the district councils to include plan provisions within regional / district plans that ensure that new hard protection structures are only undertaken in accordance with Policy 7.2.2.

For Method 7.2.4(5), once structural mitigation measures have been established, it is important that impediments to accessing these structures for ongoing maintenance purposes are avoided. This method directs councils to include plan provisions to ensure ongoing access to these structures, thereby minimising natural hazard risk to individuals and the wider community.

8 Policies and methods - Tangata whenua

8.1 Participation in decision-making, plans, consents and monitoring

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 8.1 are:

3.12 Tangata whenua role in decision-making

8.1.1 Policy – Tangata whenua participation

The regional and district councils shall provide opportunities for tangata whenua to participate in the review, development, implementation, and monitoring of plans and resource consent processes under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Explanation:
This policy supports the relationship of tangata whenua with the natural and physical environment by providing opportunities for their input into resource management processes.

8.1.2 Policy – The regional and district council statutory responsibilities

The regional and district councils shall when developing plans and processing resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA):

(a) Recognise and provide for the relationship of tangata whenua and their culture and traditions with their ancestral land, water, sites wāhi tapu, and other taonga;

(b) Have particular regard to kaitiakitanga; and

(c) Take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi including partnership.

Explanation:
Under the RMA, the regional and district councils have responsibilities to provide for tangata whenua involvement in resource management, particularly where it affects their taonga.

8.1.3 Policy – Use of Mātauranga Māori

The regional and district councils shall provide opportunities for the use and incorporation of Mātauranga Māori into decision-making, management, implementation, and monitoring of natural and physical resources under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Explanation:
This policy recognises that Mātauranga Māori has a role to play in resource management, and therefore councils should make an active effort to provide opportunities for its inclusion in resource management processes.

8.1.4 Policy – Māori concepts, values and practices

Relevant Māori concepts, values and practices will be clarified through consultation with tangata whenua to develop common understandings of their meaning and to develop methodologies for their implementation.

Explanation
A common understating of Māori concepts, values and practices between tangata whenua and councils will assist in integrating kaitiakitanga into Resource Management Act processes.

8.1.5 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

The regional and district councils shall:

(a) Engage with iwi authorities at the earliest possible stage of any review and / or change to plans developed under the Resource Management Act 1991(RMA) to agree appropriate mechanisms for tangata whenua participation and consultation; and

(b) Include an analysis of the effects of any resource consent application on tangata whenua and their taonga, including details of any proposed measures to avoid, remedy, or mitigate effects and consultation undertaken, in all regional and district council reports on resource consent applications.

Explanation:
The RMA requires the regional and district councils to undertake pre-notification consultation with tangata whenua, through iwi authorities, on any new planning document or plan change (Schedule 1, Clause 3 of the RMA). Identification of agreed mechanisms for tangata whenua participations and consultation, on a case-by-case basis, will ensure that both parties clearly understand what level of participation and consultation will occur and that it is fit for purpose. Ultimately a region-wide approach could be agreed for different processes.

Transparently recording the analysis of potential effects and measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate effects of any resource consent application on tangata whenua and their taonga represents best practice and is one way of acknowledging the kaitiaki role of tangata whenua.

8.1.6 Method – Non-statutory plans and strategies

Within two years of the Regional Policy Statement for Northland becoming operative, the regional council will initiate the development of a protocol with iwi authorities to:

(a) Determine when the regional council will:

(i) require an assessment of cultural effects (under Schedule 4 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and what it should include, and how councils will use and take into account any cultural impact assessment;

(ii) appoint and use independent Māori hearing commissioners (for resource consent applications and plans under the RMA;

(iii) hold hearings on marae and provide translation services;

(iv) notify tangata whenua of resource consent applications and confer affected party status to tangata whenua; and

(b) Determine common meanings and methodologies for key Māori concepts, values and practices, and the process for updating them.

Explanation:
The development of a protocol between the regional council and iwi authorities will ensure both parties have a shared understanding of when and how the matters identified in this method will be implemented. The protocol is likely to be implemented in a variety of ways including council publications, plan changes and guidance notes for processing resource consent applications.

8.1.7 Method – Advocacy and education

The regional and district councils shall:

(a) Actively encourage resource consent applicants to consult with tangata whenua as early in the process as possible prior to lodging consent applications for proposals that are likely to impact on tangata whenua and their taonga; and

(b) Refer resource consent applicants to any relevant iwi or hapū planning document lodged with the respective council that has been authorised by the iwi or hapū for public availability.

Explanation:
While the Resource Management Act does not require resource consent applicants to consult with tangata whenua prior to lodging a consent application, this is considered best practice, especially for proposed activities that could have a significant impact on tangata whenua and their taonga. Pre-lodgement consultation with tangata whenua and early identification of potential adverse effects and mitigation measures can reduce potential submissions and appeals, and enable the applicant to receive a decision faster. While iwi and hapū management plans are not a substitute for consultation, they are a useful tool for understanding the concerns of tangata whenua.

8.1.8 Method – Funding and assistance

The regional council will support tangata whenua if they choose to develop and implement a regional Mātauranga Māori-based environmental monitoring framework by:

(a) Providing information and advice during the development of the monitoring framework;

(b) Providing training to assist tangata whenua to promote and implement the monitoring framework on an ongoing basis; and

(c) Incorporating the results and recommendations of tangata whenua monitoring in council's monitoring reports.

Explanation:
Tangata whenua consider greater use of Mātauranga Māori as a key opportunity for greater recognition of tangata whenua's role in the management of natural and physical resources. The development of a regional Mātauranga Māori-based environmental monitoring framework is one way to enable tangata whenua to actively contribute, as kaitiaki, to the management of natural and physical resources in Te Tai Tokerau.

8.2 Iwi and hapū management plans

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 8.2 are:

3.12 Tangata whenua role in decision-making

8.2.1 Policy – Support for iwi and hapū management plans

The regional council will recognise the value of iwi and hapū management plans in decision-making under the Resource Management Act 1991 and the need to support tangata whenua in the development and implementation of these plans.

Explanation:
Iwi and hapū management plans provide a vision of how the management and protection of natural and physical resources can be achieved based on cultural and spiritual values of tangata whenua. These plans are useful tools for understanding the concerns of tangata whenua for resource management planning.

8.2.2 Method – Non-statutory plans and strategies

Within two years of the Regional Policy Statement for Northland becoming operative, the regional and district councils will initiate the development of a protocol with iwi authorities to determine when and how iwi and hapū management plans will be taken into account under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Explanation:
Considerable effort goes into the development of iwi and hapū management plans. It is therefore important that a clear understanding is established, between tangata whenua and the regional and district councils, as to how these plans will be used during the development of regional and district plans and in the assessment of resource consent applications.

8.2.3 Method – Advocacy and education

The regional and district councils shall make publicly available iwi and hapū management plans provided this has been authorised by the iwi or hapū.

Explanation:
Making iwi and hapū management plans publicly available will increase the likelihood that they are taken into consideration when preparing and assessing resource consent applications and changes to regional and district plans. However, it is recognised that iwi and hapū management plans belong to the iwi or hapū authority.

8.2.4 Method – Funding and assistance

The regional council will encourage and support tangata whenua to develop iwi and hapū management plans.

Explanation:
The regional council recognises the value of iwi and hapū management plans, and therefore commits to supporting and encouraging iwi and hapū to develop these plans.

8.3 Māori land and returned Treaty settlement assets

The objectives relevant to policy and method package 8.3 are:

3.13 Tangata whenua role in decision-making

8.3.1 Policy – Kaitiaki role

The regional and district councils shall support tangata whenua to have a kaitiaki role in the management of their land, resources, and other taonga.

Explanation:
Tangata whenua have a special relationship with their ancestral lands. Supporting tangata whenua, as kaitiaki, to identify appropriate practices and customs for the care of their lands, waters, treasures, wāhi tapu, and other taonga is important for sustainable management in Northland. This may include assisting with recording sites of significance to tangata whenua, collaborating with tangata whenua to identify high value natural and physical resources, and providing resources to assist with environmental monitoring.

8.3.2 Policy – Marae and Papa kāinga

The regional and district councils shall recognise the historical, cultural, and social importance of marae and papa kāinga, and enable their ongoing use and development in regional and district plans.

Explanation:
Development of a policy framework for the use of Māori land will support tangata whenua to sustainably use and develop their land, marae and papa kāinga. This is important as Māori land can have constraints on its use and development including multiple ownership, access and regulation when the land has been notated as having high values (such as landscape) in regional or district plans

8.3.3 Policy – Provision of information

The regional and district councils shall, when requested by iwi authorities, provide information, analysis of regional and district plan provisions, and advice during and after the Treaty settlement processes to enable tangata whenua to identify potential land use opportunities and constraints associated with returned assets.

Explanation:
The provision of information, analysis of regional and district plans and advice will enable tangata whenua to ensure, during the Treaty settlement negotiation process with the Crown, that the returned Treaty settlement assets are appropriate for the intended redress. This is important if tangata whenua are to realise the full intent of the settlement legislation and provide for their social, cultural, and economic wellbeing.

8.3.4 Method – Statutory plans and strategies

The regional and district councils shall, as soon as practicable after the Regional Policy Statement becomes operative, initiate a joint review of regional and district plans to identify and implement agreed opportunities to improve the ability of tangata whenua to develop marae and papa kāinga, and achieve greater consistency in management approaches.

Explanation:
Marae and papa kāinga developments are important to tangata whenua culture and traditions and their ongoing use and development is critical to their wellbeing. It is appropriate to investigate and implement agreed opportunities to achieve greater consistency between district plans and ensure provisions in regional and district plans do not unnecessarily compound limitations on Māori land imposed by the Māori Land Court under the Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993, and are efficiently integrated with the Māori Land Court process.

PART 9: ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS ANTICIPATED

This part of the Regional Policy Statement outlines the intended outcomes or results on the environment, which the community can expect to see or experience as a consequence of the implementation of the policy and method packages. These are closely related to the fulfilment of the objectives.

4.1 Integrated catchment management

1. Catchment-specific objectives and limits are met and where there is over-allocation progress is made towards achieving targets for improving water quality or quantity.	Objective 3.1

4.2 Region-wide water quality management

2. The overall trophic level index (TLI) status of Northland's monitored lakes is maintained or improved.	Objective 3.2
3. The macroinvertebrate community index (MCI) at regionally representative sites show improving or maintained trends.	
4. Mean annual sedimentation rates (or turbidity levels) at representative sites in the Bay of Islands, Whāngārei Harbour, and the Kaipara Harbour show improving or maintained trends.	
5. Compliance rates for contact recreation at popular swimming sites are maintained or improved with respect to the relevant guidelines.	
6. Levels of indicator bacteria in open coastal waters at 15 popular shellfish collection sites is maintained or improved.	

4.3 Region wide water quantity management

7. Region-wide ecological flows and water levels are not exceeded.	Objective 3.3

4.4 Maintaining and enhancing indigenous ecosystems and species

8. A progressive increase in the area of indigenous ecosystems and habitats on private land, in water bodies, and in the coastal marine area under protection.	Objective 3.4
9. No increase in the number of regionally threatened species in Northland as a result of subdivision, use and development.	

4.5 Identifying the coastal environment and significant natural character, features / landscapes and historic heritage resources

10. The Regional Policy Statement – Maps of Outstanding natural landscapes and features, high and outstanding natural character areas and the coastal environment provide a consistent basis for appropriate management of these resources.	Objective 3.14
11. Policy 4.5.3 provides a consistent basis for assessing, recording and appropriate management of historic heritage.	

4.6 Managing effects on natural character, features / landscapes and heritage

12. The integrity of Outstanding natural landscapes, outstanding natural features and outstanding natural character are not subject to inappropriate degradation over the life of the Regional Policy Statement.	Objective 3.14
13. The coastal environment, landscape and natural character of Northland remains a primary attraction for visitors.	
14. Heritage features that meet the criteria in Policy 4.5.3 are added regularly into plans and no significant reduction in the number of such features in plans occurs due to modification / destruction.	
15. Cultural / heritage impact assessments are required in consent processes where heritage features are potentially affected and the information they provide is reflected in decisions and/or conditions of consent.	

4.7 Supporting management and improvement

16. Activities with only benign adverse effects or positive effects are not subject to the consent process.	Objective 3.15
17. Plans target incentives towards the areas identified in Method 4.7.4(1).	
18. Community, iwi, hapū and landowner environmental improvement efforts are focussed in a manner or location that provides the most public benefit.	
19. Councils support initiatives for restoration in areas targeted in Method 4.7.4(1).	
20. The amenity, natural character and recreational value of areas targeted in Method 4.7.4(1).increases over the life of the Regional Policy Statement.	

4.8 Efficient use of coastal water space

21. All new structures and in the common marine and coastal area are an efficient use of the space.	Objective 3.10

5.1 Regional form

22. Urban growth and development is managed in an integrated manner.	Objective 3.11
23. New use and development fits within the context of the surrounding environment and provides a range of lifestyle choices and in urban areas provides for a range of transport options.	
24. Mixed use development is provided for in appropriate locations.	
25. There is no increase in noise, odour or vibration complaints arising from incompatible activities.	Objective 3.6
26. The ability to access regionally significant mineral resources is not compromised by inappropriate subdivision, use and development.	Objective 3.6

5.2 Efficient and effective infrastructure

27. Northland's use of resources supplied by infrastructure becomes more efficient over time and waste is managed more efficiently.	Objective 3.8
28. Northland's infrastructure becomes more efficient over time.	

5.3 Regionally significant infrastructure

29. The benefits of regionally significant infrastructure are given appropriate recognition in the consenting process.	Objective 3.7
30. Northland has a secure and available gas supply.	Objective 3.9

5.4 Renewable energy

31. Northland becomes self-sufficient for its electricity needs and a net exporter of electricity over time.	Objective 3.9
32. The benefits and practicable constraints associated with renewable electricity generation are given appropriate recognition in the consenting process.	

6.1 Supporting economic development

33. The impacts of resource management decisions are well understood.	Objective 3.5
34. An increasingly consistent approach to cross-boundary issues.	
35. Reduced compliance costs.	
36. Increased business and investment growth.	

7.1 Development in natural hazard-prone areas

37. Where subdivision, use and development occurs in areas subject to natural hazards, the potential adverse effects of those natural hazards are mitigated by appropriate design.	Objective 3.13
38. Communities are increasingly resilient to the effects of natural hazard events.	

7.2 General risk reduction policies

39. The adverse effects of natural hazard mitigation measures on the environment will be avoided or mitigated.	Objective 3.13
40. Reduction in the need / demand for hard protection structures.	

8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 Tangata Whenua

41. Tangata whenua values and their kaitiaki role are considered in all resource management decisions.	Objective 3.12
42. Improved working relationships with iwi and hapū to achieve mutually acceptable environmental outcomes.	

PART 10: REVIEW AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

Monitoring is an important part of decision-making processes. It enables us to check on the progress being made towards the achievement of objectives and the efficiency and effectiveness of the options we have chosen. The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) recognises the value of monitoring and gives the regional and district councils major responsibilities in this area.

We monitor:

- The state of Northland's environment;
- The efficiency and effectiveness of our policies and plans;
- The exercise of any functions we delegated; and
- The compliance with resource consents.

Section 35 of the RMA outlines the regional and district council information gathering, monitoring and record keeping responsibilities.

The regional council already has a number of policies and procedures in place to gather information, and to monitor and report on how well we are managing Northland's natural and physical resources. This includes:

(a) The Annual Monitoring Report which outlines Northland's environmental monitoring results for the year;

(b) The State of the Environment Monitoring Report for Northland. It is produced every five years and is a comprehensive analysis of the environmental monitoring results and trends; and

(c) The regional council's Annual Report which reports against objectives and performance measures in the regional council's Long Term Plan for Northland, developed under the Local Government Act 2002.

The content of future Annual Monitoring Reports and State of the Environment Reports will be reviewed and updated to reflect the new environmental goals (objectives) and ensure the right information is being gathered to monitor the environmental results anticipated of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS).

Specific environmental indicators will be developed to monitor progress towards each environmental results anticipated. These indicators will be developed outside of the RPS, within six months of it becoming operative, and included in a Regional Monitoring Strategy for Northland. This will enable the monitoring indicators to evolve, for example, to move with monitoring technology and latest best practice guidance.

The development of the State of the Environment Report will be coordinated so that it provides the necessary information in a timely manner to the five-yearly efficiency and effectiveness reviews of the RPS and regional plans[22].

[22] Section 35(2)(b) of the Resource Management Act 1991 requires the regional council to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of it resource management planning documents every five years.

Glossary

The glossary contains definitions of key terms used in the Regional Policy Statement. Terms defined in the Resource Management Act 1991 are not repeated in this glossary. Where another statutory document has an appropriate definition of a term, the term is included in the glossary with a reference to the relevant statutory document.

Term	Definition	Ref
Audited self-management	Means a management programme (individual, industry, or resource user collective) which allows for the credible and transparent demonstration (audit) that agreed actions have been implemented.	4.2.2, 6.1.1, 6.1.4
Biodiversity offsets	*Note: this definition should be read in conjunction with the definition for Environmental Biodiversity Compensation* Biodiversity offsets are measureable outcomes resulting from actions designed to provide new positive effects to counter residual adverse effects of subdivision, use and development on indigenous biodiversity. Biodiversity offsetting proposals must address the following principles: (1) Offsetting measures compensate for residual adverse effects on biodiversity identified after adverse effects have been avoided, remedied, or mitigated according to the mitigation hierarchy; (2) Offsetting measures achieve biodiversity outcomes above and beyond results that would have occurred if the offset had not taken place. The design and implementation of an offset should be based on sound science and avoid displacing activities harmful to biodiversity to other locations; (3) That there is no net loss and preferably a net gain of biodiversity values; (4) Offsetting measures re-establish or protect the same type of ecosystem or habitat that is adversely affected (like-for-like), unless an alternative ecosystem or habitat provides a significantly better biodiversity outcomes; (5) The offsetting measures should apply as close as possible to the site incurring the effect with benefit diminishing with distance; (6) The offsetting measures last at least as long as the effects of the activity, but preferably in perpetuity and incorporate monitoring and	4.4.1, 4.4.3, 5.3.3

	evaluation to allow for adaptive management where appropriate; (7) The delay between the loss of ecological values through development and the gain or maturation of biodiversity values through offsetting measures is minimised; (8) Compliance with offsetting measures is secured, as far as possible; (9) There are limits to what can be offset when affected biodiversity is irreplaceable or vulnerable. In such circumstances off-setting cannot be considered as a means of dealing with adverse effects.	
Built development	Any structure designed for human occupation and requires a building consent under the Building Act 2004.	2.7, 2.8, 4.6.1, 4.6.3, 7.1.2, 7.1.7
Coastal hazard areas	These are areas where there is potential for damage to people or property as a result of flooding or erosion by seawater. This includes, within a likely 100-year timeframe, the risks associated with coastal storm surge and wave run-up, tsunami inundation and erosion by wave action or currents.	3.13, 7.1.1, 7.1.3, 7.1.4, 7.1.5, 7.1.7
Coastal water quality classifications	Describe intended environmental outcome(s).	4.1.2, 4.4.3
Commercial activities	Office, retail and commercial service provider activities.	3.6, 3.9, 5.1.3
Commercial zones	Any zone within a regional or district plan that has the primary purpose of providing commercial activities.	5.1.3
Common natural resources	Are resources that are not held in private ownership such as, they are 'owned' by the public (either actually or in effect).	2.3, 3.10
Critical infrastructure	Is defined in section 4, page 13, Critical Lifeline Utility Sites – Northland Lifeline Groups: Infrastructure Resilience Plan. In addition to certain utility and communication services, critical infrastructure can include public healthcare institutions and emergency services which are vital to respond to the event and ensure community recovery after the event.	7.1.5, 7.1.7
Ecological flows and / or water levels	Are a subset of environmental flows and water levels. They are a type of limit which describes the amount of water in a body of freshwater (except ponds and naturally ephemeral water bodies) which is required to meet a freshwater objective that provides for the safeguarding of aquatic ecosystems. Ecological flows for rivers and streams must include an allocation limit, a minimum flow (or other flow/s) and some provision for flow variability. Ecological water levels for other bodies of freshwater must include an allocation limit and a minimum water level (or other level/s).	2.1, 3.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.5
Ecological integrity	The full potential of indigenous biotic and abiotic features, and natural processes, functioning in	2.2, 3.4, 4.4.2

	sustainable communities, habitats, and landscapes. Ecological integrity would be achieved when all the indigenous organisms (plants, animals, fungi, etc.) typical of a region are present, together with the key processes that sustain functional relationships between all these components, across all of the ecosystems represented in Northland. At larger scales, ecological integrity is achieved when ecosystems occupy their full environmental range. Components of ecological integrity are: 1. Species occupancy (to avoid extinctions) – Are the indigenous species present that you would expect? 2. Indigenous dominance (to maintain natural ecological processes) – Are the key ecological processes maintained by native biota? 3. Ecosystem representation (to maintain 'a full range of ecosystems') – Are the full range of ecosystems in Northland protected somewhere?[23]	
Ecosystem	Refers to an integrated system composed of a biotic (living) community (including humans), its abiotic (non-living) environment, and their dynamic interactions (ecological processes).	Numerous,
Efficient allocation	Includes economic, technical and dynamic efficiency.	3.10, 4.1.2 4.3.4, 4.3.5, 4.3.6, 4.8.2 4.8.3
Environmental Biodiversity Compensation (EBC)	Environmental Biodiversity Compensation (EBC) consists of measureable outcomes resulting from actions designed to provide new positive effects to counter residual adverse effects of subdivision, use and development on indigenous biodiversity. EBC proposals must address the following principles: (1) EBC Measures compensate for residual adverse effects on biodiversity identified after adverse effects have been avoided, remedied, mitigated or offset, according to the mitigation hierarchy; (2) EBC Measures achieve biodiversity outcomes above and beyond results that would have occurred if the EBC had not taken place. The design and implementation should be based on sound science and avoid displacing activities harmful to biodiversity to other locations;	4.4.1

[23] William G Lee and Robert B Allen May 2011: 'Recommended monitoring framework for regional councils assessing biodiversity outcomes in terrestrial ecosystems', Landcare Research http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz/pdfs/recommended-council-monitoring-framework-report.pdf

	(3) That there is no net loss and preferably a net gain of biodiversity values; (4) Where EBC measures are unable to re-establish or protect the same type of ecosystem or habitat that is adversely affected (like-for-like), consider alternatives that demonstrate a better biodiversity outcome; (5) Where the benefit will diminish with distance, this should be taken into account when assessing the EBC measure; (6) The measures last at least as long as the effects of the activity, but preferably in perpetuity and incorporate monitoring and evaluation to allow for adaptive management where appropriate; (7) The delay between the loss of ecological values through development and the gain or maturation of biodiversity values through the EBC measures is minimised; (8) Compliance with EBC measures is secured as far as possible. There are limits to what can be compensated when affected biodiversity is irreplaceable or vulnerable. In such circumstances EBC may not be appropriate as a means of dealing with adverse effects.	
Environmental flows and / or levels	Are a type of limit which describes the amount of water in a body of freshwater (except ponds and naturally ephemeral water bodies) which is required to meet freshwater objectives. Environmental flows for rivers and streams must include an allocation limit, and a minimum flow (or other flow/s). Environmental levels for other bodies of freshwater must include an allocation limit and a minimum water level (or other level/s).	4.1.1, 4.1.2 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 4.3.1, 4.3.3, 4.3.5, 4.4.3, 5.3.3
Freshwater objectives	Describes the intended environmental outcome(s).	3.4, 4.1.2, 4.1.4, 4.4.3
Good management practice	Refers to the evolving suite of tools or practical measures that could be put in place at a land user, sector and industry level to assist in achieving community agreed outcomes	3.5, 4.1.2 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4 6.1.1, 6.1.4
Hāpu	Sub tribe, clan, section of a large tribe.	1.4, 3.15 4.1.2, 4.7.2, 8.1.7
Hazardous substances	Is the legal term for substances regulated by New Zealand's Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. A hazardous substance is a defined mixture of elements or compounds either naturally occurring or produced synthetically. Such substances can readily explode, burn, oxidise (accelerate the combustion of other material) or	1.6, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 7.1.7

	corrode (metals or biological tissue), and / or be toxic to people and ecosystems.	
High Risk Coastal Hazard Areas	These are locations that have been assessed at relatively high or extreme risk from the effects of coastal hazards over a planning horizon of 50 years. They are currently identified in district plans as coastal hazard 1 areas.	7.1.3, 7.1.7
Indigenous ecosystems	Include: a) Terrestrial ecosystems with indigenous dominance to modified ecosystems in production and urban environments; and b) Ecosystems of natural freshwater bodies and the coastal marine area.	Numerous
Industrial activities	Manufacturing, assembly, packaging, wholesaling or storage of products or the processing of raw materials and their ancillary activities.	3.6, 5.1.3
Industrial zones	Any zone within a regional or district plan that has the primary purpose of providing for industrial activities.	5.1.3
Iwi	Tribe.	Numerous
Kai moana	Seafood, especially shellfish.	2.6
Limit	Is the maximum amount of resource use available, which allows a freshwater quality or quantity objective to be met.	3.1, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.5, 4.4.3, 5.3.3
Mahinga kai	Food and places for obtaining natural foods and resources. The work (mahi), methods and cultural activities involved in obtaining foods and resources.	2.1, 2.6
Manaaki manuhiri	Support, cater for, look after visitors.	2.6
Mātauranga Māori	In the traditional context means the knowledge, comprehension or understanding of everything visible or invisible that exists across the universe. This meaning is related to the modern context as Māori research, science and technology principles and practices.[24]	2.5, 2.6, 8.1.3, 8.1.8
Materially damaged	For the purposes of Method 7.1.8(8), "materially damaged" means situations where damage has occurred to the extent that repair or replacement requires a building consent under the Building Act.	7.1.7
Mauri	The essential life force, energy or principle that tangata whenua believe exists in all things in the natural world, including people. Tangata whenua believe it is the vital essence or life force by which all things cohere in nature. When mauri is absent there is no life. When mauri is degraded, or absent, tangata whenua believe this can mean that they have been remiss in their kaitiakitanga responsibilities and this affects their relationship with the atua (Māori gods).	2.1, 2.6

[24] Charles Mohi, Mātauranga Māori – A National Resource, a paper prepared for the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, 1993, pp1-3.

	Mauri can also be imbued within manmade or physical objects.	
Mineral	Means a naturally occurring inorganic substance beneath or at the surface of the earth, whether or not under water; and includes all metallic minerals, non-metallic minerals, fuel minerals, precious stones, industrial rocks and building stones, and a prescribed substance within the meaning of the Atomic Energy Act 1945. (Crown Minerals Act 1991).	Numerous
Over-allocation	Is the situation where the resource: a) Has been allocated to users beyond a limit; or b) Is being used to a point where a freshwater objective is no longer being met. This applies to both water quantity and quality.	4.1.1,4.1.2, 4.2.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.5, 5.3.3,
Papa kāinga	A form of housing development which occurs on multiply-owned Māori or ancestral land. Traditionally, the literal meaning of papa kāinga housing is, 'a nurturing place to return to.	2.5, 8.3.2, 8.3.4
Pest / Pest organism	These include any unwanted living organism including micro-organisms, pest agents, plants, animals and marine pests and any genetic structure that is capable of replicating itself (whether that structure comprises all or only part of an entity, and whether it comprises all or only part of the total genetic structure of an entity) that may affect plants, animals, or raw primary produce; and a) Includes any entity declared to be a pest in the Northland Regional Pest Management Strategies or otherwise by Northland Regional Council for the purposes of the Biosecurity Act 1993; b) Does not include, any human being or living organism which affects only human beings; or any living organism declared not to be a pest for the purposes of the Biosecurity Act.	2.2, 2.6, 2.8, 3.4, 3.15, 4.4.3, 4.4.4, 4.7.1
Primary production activities	(1) The growing of vegetative matter or raising of animals (including aquatic organisms) for commercial gain, and their ancillary activities. (2) The extraction of minerals (including aggregates) for commercial gain, and their ancillary activities.	3.6, 3.9, 5.1.1, 5.1.3
Primary production zone	Any zone within a district or regional plan that has the primary purpose of providing for one or more primary production activities.	5.1.1, 5.1.3
Public benefit	The full range of benefits the public (local, district or region scale) would derive. They include direct and indirect social, economic, and cultural benefits, on dry land and within the coastal marine area.	3.15, 4.7.2, 4.8.4, 5.1.1, 5.3.1
Regionally Significant Infrastructure	See Appendix 3 for a list of identified regionally significant infrastructure. Regionally significant infrastructure extends to the site related components that enable the asset to function.	2.3, 3.6, 3.7, 3.9, 4.7.1, 4.7.2, 5.1.3, 5.1.5, 5.1.8, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.3.4, 7.1.5, 7.1.7

Regionally Significant Mineral Resources	See Policy 5.1.4 for criteria to identify regionally significant mineral resources.	3.6, 5.1.3, 5.1.4, 5.1.5, 5.1.6, 5.1.8
Renewable Electricity Generation	Means generation of electricity from solar, wind, hydro-electricity, geothermal, biomass, tidal, wave, or ocean current energy sources. (National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation, 2011.)	2.3, 3.9, 5.1.5, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3, 5.4.5
Renewable Electricity Generation Activities	Means the construction, operation and maintenance of structures associated with renewable electricity generation. This includes small and community-scale distributed renewable generation activities and the system of electricity conveyance required to convey electricity to the distribution network and / or the national grid and electricity storage technologies associated with renewable electricity. (National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation, 2011.)	5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3
Residual risk	Is defined as the risk remaining after implementation of risk treatment.	7.1.1
Reverse sensitivity	Reverse sensitivity occurs when occupants of a new development (for example, a lifestyle block) complain about the effects of an existing, lawfully established activity (for example, noise or smell from industry or farming). This can have the effect of imposing economic burdens or operational limitations on the existing activity thereby reducing their viability.	2.3, 2.4, 3.6 5.1.1, 5.1.3, 5.1.5
Risk	Is defined as expected losses (such as, the probability or likelihood of specified negative consequence to life, wellbeing, property, economic activity, environmental, and other specified values) due to a particular hazard (or group of hazards) for a given area and time period.	2.6, 3.13, 5.1.2, 7.1.1, 7.1.9, 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.2.3, 7.2.4
Risk reduction	Reduction is defined as identifying and analysing long-term risks to human life and property from natural hazards; taking steps to eliminate these risks if practicable, and, if not, reducing the magnitude of their impact and the likelihood of their occurring (Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, 2005).	3.13, 7.1.1, 7.1.7, 7.1.9, 7.2.2
Small and community scale distributed electricity generation	Means renewable electricity generation for the purpose of using electricity on a particular site, or supplying an immediate community, or connecting into the distribution network. (National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation, 2011.)	3.9, 5.4.2, 5.4.3, 5.4.5.
Social infrastructure	A system of social services, networks and facilities that support communities and people. Social infrastructure considerations should include community infrastructure including schools, hospitals, sports and community facilities, green infrastructure including parks and recreational spaces and, where	Appendix 2

	appropriate, access to blue infrastructure including waterways and water bodies.	
Sterilisation	When new activities (for example residential development) constrains the ability to access and, therefore, exploit a resource to its full potential (for example, the use of land for mining).	3.6
Taonga	Treasure, property; taonga are prized and protected as sacred possessions of the tribe. The term carries a deep spiritual meaning and taonga may be things that cannot be seen or touched. Included for example are te reo Māori (Māori language), wāhi tapu, waterways, fishing grounds and mountains.	2.5, 2.6, 3.12, 5.3.3, 8.1.2, 8.1.5, 8.1.7, 8.3.1
Target	Is a limit which must be met at a defined time in the future. This meaning only applies in the context of over-allocation of water.	4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3
Taxa	Means named biological classification units assigned to individuals or sets of species (for example, species, subspecies, genus, order, and variety).	4.4.1
Tikanga	Can be described as lore, custom, practice or common-sense thoughts that are based on the Māori belief system. The application of tikanga is diverse and can vary depending upon when and where an event takes place. Tikanga provides a framework for rules that govern harvesting, the care and respect for customary resources and the environment.	2.5
Wāhi tapu	Sacred site: these are defined locally by the hapū and iwi which are kaitiaki for the wāhi tapu. Typically includes burial grounds and sites of historical importance to the tribe. In order to protect particular sites from interference and desecration, some tribes will refuse to disclose the exact location to outsiders.	5.3.3, 2.5, 2.6, 8.1.2, 8.3.1
Water harvesting	Means the taking and storing of water when the availability is high and using it at a later time.	4.3.4, 4.3.6 5.2.6
Whānau	Family (extended).	2.5, 2.6

Appendix 1 - Mapping methods

Landscape assessment criteria

The following criteria were used to identify Northland's outstanding natural landscapes (ONLs) as mapped in the Regional Policy Statement – Maps.

Natural science factors: This subsection evaluated and provided context for the natural science factors by determining their value in terms of representativeness and / or rarity at a regional or national level.	
Representativeness	Considered the level of importance of the landscape with regard to how clearly characteristic the landscape is of the area, district or region. This section included comment on the key components of the landscape, defined the character of the place and distilled its character and essence. It also considered any endemic associations that are present.
Rarity	Assessed whether the landscape or feature is unique or rare in the region or nationally, or has components that can be considered as unique or rare.
Aesthetic values: The aesthetic values subsection assigned value to the landscape using a series of factors.	
Coherence	Coherence was used to describe the patterns of land cover and land use and whether they are 'in harmony' with the underlying natural pattern of the landform of the area, and whether there are any significant discordant elements of land cover or land use. It assessed how 'natural', or unmodified the landscape is.
Diversity and complexity	This factor considered the extent to which elements contributing to overall landscape character are diverse and complex (particularly in ecological terms) without creating disharmony. For example, an area containing a collective of shoreline, saltmarsh, freshwater wetland, coastal shrubland and a backing of indigenous forest, which form a coherent sequence.
Vividness	Vividness, a distinctiveness or power which results in the feature or landscape being widely recognised across the community and beyond the local area, and remains clearly in the memory. Remarkable or striking landscapes can be symbolic of an area due to their recognisable and memorable qualities.
Naturalness	This factor evaluated the extent to which the feature or landscape appeared affected by human activity. It determined whether human activity intrudes on the landscape and included consideration of the following matters: • Presence of buildings and associated built development. • Presence of infrastructure services. • Extent of indigenous forest cover.

	• Homogeneity of exotic vegetation. • Presence / extent / nature of modified agricultural land use. • Strength of natural processes / ecological patterns. • Unmodified and legible physical relief and landform. • Presence of water.
Intactness	Focused on the intactness and aesthetic coherence of natural systems (being ecological, hydrological and geomorphological processes). It assessed whether these systems display significant visual signs of human modification, intervention or manipulation, and whether they are visually intact and highly aesthetic natural landscapes.
Experiential values: The first four factors of this subsection assigned value using more subjective experiential factors, whilst the latter two evaluated the shared community values and associations of features or landscapes.	
Expressiveness	Expressiveness described how clearly a feature or landscape demonstrates the processes by which it was formed – the 'legibility' of the landscape. Sea cliffs, river gorges and volcanic cones are examples of landscapes or features that are highly expressive, when they are unmodified by human activity.
Sensory qualities	These are landscape phenomena as directly perceived and experienced by humans, such as the view of a scenic landscape, or the distinctive smell and sound of the foreshore.
Transient values	The experience of landscape can be heightened by the consistent and repeated occurrence of transient features that contribute to the character, qualities and values of the landscape. This may include for instance the flowering of kōwhai, or pōhutukawa, bird migrations, or a more regular event such as tidal movement within an estuary, changes in light level or sun direction.
Remoteness / wildness	This evaluation considered whether the landscape displays a wilderness character that is remote from and untouched by human presence. For example: • Sense of remoteness • Accessibility • Distance from built development.
Shared and recognised values	Natural landscapes can be widely recognised and valued by the immediate and wider community for their contribution to a sense of place, leading to a strong community association with, or high public esteem for the place. Examples of this include Maunganui Bluff, Waipoua Forest or Whāngārei Heads / Manaia.
Spiritual, cultural and historical associations	This factor included both activities and associative meanings. These could be spiritual, cultural or social associations with particular landscape elements, features, or areas, whilst associative activities are patterns of social activity that occur in particular parts of

	a landscape, for example, popular walking routes or fishing spots.

Each of the evaluation criteria were ranked and the final determination of whether an individual feature or landscape merits being identified as an ONL was based on an evaluation and judgmental weighting of the 'ratings'. The ratings were not additive. A full copy of the assessment worksheets and methodology used for evaluating the region's landscapes: *Northland Regional Council Northland Mapping Project: Outstanding Natural Landscapes – Mapping Methodology Report,* is available from Northland Regional Council.

Natural character assessment criteria

The following attributes are to be used in any further assessment to identify Northland's outstanding and high natural character areas in the coastal environment (as mapped in the Regional Policy Statement – Maps). These attributes are based on Policy 13(2) of the NZCPS 2010.

Natural character attributes

Recognise that natural character is not the same as natural features and landscapes or amenity values and may include matters such as the following to identify a range of natural character from pristine to modified:

a) Natural elements, processes and patterns;
b) Biophysical, ecological and geomorphological aspects;
c) Natural landforms such as headlands, peninsulas, cliffs, dunes, wetlands, reefs, freshwater springs and surf breaks;
d) The natural movement of water and sediment;
e) The natural darkness of the night sky;
f) Places or areas that are wild or scenic; and
g) Experiential attributes, including the sounds and smell of the sea; and their context or setting.

As a guide

- **Outstanding natural character** generally means entirely natural (such as near to pristine indigenous land cover, negligible human features e.g. buildings, structures, paved surfaces, roading or vehicle tracks) and a very strong experience of naturalness.

- **High natural character** generally means a high proportion of indigenous vegetation cover, visually unobtrusive land management (e.g. low intensity pasture), few and visually subservient human features and a strong experience of naturalness.

- **Areas where natural character is less than high** generally means one or more of the following: Mostly modified land cover (e.g. pasture, plantations), limited remnant indigenous vegetation, obvious land management patterns, obvious or prominent human structures, and a modest experience of naturalness.

A full copy of the assessment worksheets and methodology used for evaluating coastal natural character: *Northland Regional Council Northland Mapping Project: Natural Character Methodology* is available from Northland Regional Council.

Coastal environment assessment criteria:

The following criteria were used to identify Northland's coastal environment as mapped in the Regional Policy Statement – Maps.

Areas / characteristics	Application / description
The coastal marine area and islands within it	Self-explanatory
Areas where coastal processes, influences or qualities are significant, including coastal lakes, lagoons, tidal estuaries, saltmarshes, coastal wetlands, and the margins of these	Key evaluation criteria / elements: a) Landform and land contour. b) Salt tolerant vegetation. Generally included: a) Visible dune systems (vegetated or unvegetated). b) Coastal lakes and wetlands occurring immediately behind dune systems. c) Coastal lakes and wetlands occurring adjacent to dune systems, where these have identified coastal characteristics. d) Contiguous natural sequences of regionally significant estuary / coastal wetland to freshwater wetland. e) Margins of lagoons, estuaries and saltmarshes (using land contour or a set distance). f) Land adjoining freshwater rush marsh areas behind mangroves and / or saltmarshes (using land contour or a set distance) except in upper estuarine areas and / or in areas where there is extensive coastal wetland present, in which case only the freshwater wetland is included (and no land margin). Did not include: a) Modified wetlands captured under a), b), c) or e), that are partially drained and / or infilled and not potentially capable of restoration. Other considerations: a) Land use classification (LUC) of 8e1 and 7e10 (i.e. young dunes).
Areas at risk from coastal hazards	Key evaluation criteria / elements: a) Mapped information on coastal hazards. b) Land contour Generally included: a) Mapped coastal erosion and coastal flooding high hazard areas. Did not include:

	a) Full extent of mapped tsunami inundation areas.
Coastal vegetation and the habitat of indigenous coastal species including migratory birds	Key evaluation criteria / elements: a) Plants associated with estuaries, sandy beaches and rocky shores. b) Known habitats of coastal bird species. c) Landform and land contour. Generally included: The following vegetation, where it is seaward facing or otherwise visible from the coast: a) For estuaries: o Mangroves o Sea rush (wiwi) o Jointed wire rush (oioi) o Sellieria (remuremu) o Glasswort (ureure) o Giant umbrella sedge (toetoe upoko-tangata) o Saltmarsh ribbonwood (makaka) o Sea primrose (maakoako). b) For sandy areas: o Pingao, spinifex and marram o Shore groundsel o Ice plant o Sand coprosma o Beach spinach (kokihi) o Shore bindweed (nihinihi) o Coprosma repens (taupata) o Cottonwood o Wire vine (pohuehue). c) For rocky / hard shores o Pohutukawa o Hebe elliptica (coastal koromiko) o Coastal five finger (houpara) o Coastal astelia (kowharawhara) o Melicope ternata (wharangi) o Flax (harakeke) o Rock lily (rengarenga).
Elements and features that contribute to the natural character, landscape, visual qualities or amenity values	Key evaluation criteria / elements: a) Land contour / visibility from coastal marine area b) Landscape assessments c) Coast landform type (e.g. harbour, estuary, beach, rocky shoreline) d) Public access. Generally included: Areas within the first prominent ridge line or contour, especially where:

	a) These are close to the coast (nominally within 2km); and b) The land rises directly from the coastline up to the ridgeline; and c) The ridgeline is: o more or less parallel with the coast; or o otherwise forms a contiguous visual backdrop and / or catchment area enclosing a coastal segment such as a beach or embayment.
Items of cultural and historic heritage in the coastal marine area or on the coast	Key evaluation criteria / elements: a) Areas of identified cultural and historic heritage associated with the coast. b) Land contour. Generally included: a) Clusters of recorded archaeological sites with a clear coastal association.
Inter-related coastal marine and terrestrial systems, including the intertidal zone	Key evaluation criteria / elements: a) Evidence of obvious physical and ecological relationships between the coastal marine area and adjacent land. Generally included: a) Visually prominent linkages between beaches, dunelands, coastal floodplains and / or coastal cliffs, and to intact sequences of indigenous vegetation, e.g. from mangroves to saltmarsh to freshwater wetlands and / or coastal forest.
Physical resources and built facilities, including infrastructure, that have modified the coastal environment.	Key evaluation criteria / elements: a) Evidence of obvious physical and / or operational connection with coast. Generally includes: a) All structures in the coastal marine area b) The landward component of marinas and ports c) In urban areas, properties that have direct access to the coastal marine area or are on cliff edges or ridgelines, where they have a significant and relatively unencumbered view of the coast.
Flat, low-lying areas without distinctive or discernible natural coastal features	Key evaluation criteria / elements: a) No evidence of distinctive or discernible natural coastal features. Generally included:

	a) In open coast areas, the land area within a 300 metre set back from mean high water springs b) In open harbour and estuarine, areas the land area within a 150 metre set back from mean high water springs c) In upper estuarine areas*, the land within a 20 metre set back from mean high water springs. * Upper estuarine areas are those areas where the channel is narrow (nominally 100 metres or less) and essentially riverine in shape.

A full copy of the assessment worksheets and methodology used to identify the coastal environment: *Northland Regional Council Northland Mapping Project: Coastal Environment Mapping Methodology Report* is available from Northland Regional Council.

Outstanding natural features

The following criteria were used to identify Northland's outstanding natural features (as mapped in the Regional Policy Statement – Maps).

The major source of information used to identify outstanding natural features (ONF) is the "Inventory (and maps) of Important Geological Sites and Landforms in the Northland Region", Geological Society of New Zealand, edited by J Kenny and B Hayward (1995).

The inventory provides a ranking of significance and vulnerability for each identified site. The significance ranking provides three levels:

A International
B National
C Regional

A vulnerability classification (1 - 4) is also assigned to each feature, depending on its perceived susceptibility to human activities:

1 = Vulnerable to complete destruction by human actions;
2 = Vulnerable to significant modifications by human actions;
3 = Probably not vulnerable to any likely human actions; or
4 = Already destroyed by or immune to human actions.

The Regional Policy Statement maps have only included those features that:

- Are natural – the inventory includes a number of features that are the result of human activity (for example, mine relics). These are not considered outstanding *natural* features for the purpose of section 6(b) RMA and are not included in the RPS maps.
- Are not considered vulnerable to human activity. As an example, no feature with a vulnerability rank of 4 has been included; nor are those that are of regional significance, but have a relatively low vulnerability ranking and are unlikely to be damaged by humans (that is, features that rank C3).
- Have been mapped by the Geoscience Society – not all of the sites in the inventory have had their precise location or physical extent mapped. Method 4.6.4(3) of this Regional Policy Statement includes measures to address this through future assessment and potential mapping of the features listed in Appendix 4.

A number of the Regional Policy Statement Maps of volcanic cones differ slightly from the maps in the inventory. In these relatively limited cases, the ONF has been defined using the more dramatic contour change which more accurately identifies the important elements of the cone form.

In several other cases where volcanic cones are also subject to outstanding natural landscape (ONL), the ONF boundaries have been aligned with the ONL.

A full copy of the methodology used to identify outstanding natural features: *Northland Regional Council Northland Mapping Project: Outstanding natural features Mapping Methodology Report* is available from Northland Regional Council.

Appendix 2 – Regional development and design guidelines

Part A) Regional form and development guidelines

New subdivision, use and development should:

(a) Demonstrate access to a secure supply of water; and
(b) Demonstrate presence or capacity or feasibility for effective wastewater treatment; and
(c) If of an urban or residential nature connect well with existing development and make use of opportunities for urban intensification and redevelopment to minimise the need for urban development in greenfield (undeveloped) areas; and
(d) If of an urban or residential nature provide, where possible, opportunities to access a range of transport modes; and
(e) If of a community-scale, encourage flexible, affordable and adaptable social infrastructure that is well located and accessible in relation to residential development, public transport services and other development; and
(f) Recognise the importance of and provide for parks, in regards to medium and large-scale residential and residential / mixed use development.
(g) If of a residential nature be, wherever possible, located close to or sited in a manner that is accessible to a broad range of social infrastructure; and
(h) Be directed away from regionally significant mineral resources and setback from their access routes to avoid reverse sensitivity effects; and
(i) Be designed, located and sited to avoid adverse effects on energy transmission corridors and consented or designated renewable energy generation sites (refer to 'Regional form and infrastructure' for more details and guidance); and
(j) Be designed, located and cited to avoid significant adverse effects on transportation corridors and consented or designated transport corridors; and
(k) Be directed away from 10-year and 100-year flood areas and high risk coastal hazard areas (refer to 'Natural hazards' for more details and guidance); and
(l) Seek to maintain or improve outstanding landscape and natural character values and provide for the protection of significant historic and cultural heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use and development (refer to 'Land, Water and Common Resources' for more details and guidance); and
(m) Protect significant ecological areas and species, and where possible enhance indigenous biological diversity (refer to 'Maintaining and enhancing indigenous ecosystems and species' for more details and guidance); and
(n) Maintain and improve public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes and rivers; and
(o) Avoid or mitigate adverse effects on natural hydrological characteristics and processes (including aquifer recharge), soil stability, water quality and aquatic ecosystems, including through low impact design methods where appropriate; and
(p) Adopt, where appropriate, sustainable design technologies such as the incorporation of energy-efficient (including passive solar) design, low-energy street lighting, rain gardens, renewable energy technologies, rainwater storage and grey water recycling techniques; and
(q) Be designed to allow adaptation to the projected effects of climate change (refer to 'Natural Hazards' for more details and guidance); and
(r) Consider effects on the unique tangata whenua relationships, values, aspirations, roles and responsibilities with respect to the site of development; and

(s) Encourage waste minimisation and efficient use of resources (such as through resource-efficient design and construction methods); and
(t) Take into account adopted regional / sub-regional growth strategies; and
(u) Where appropriate, encourage housing choice and business opportunities, particularly within urban areas.

Part B) Regional urban design guidelines

Context

Quality urban design sees buildings, places and spaces not as isolated elements but as part of the whole town or city. In this regard, quality urban design:

(a) Takes a long-term view; and
(b) Recognises and builds on landscape context and character; and
(c) Results in buildings and places that are adapted to local climatic conditions; and
(d) Celebrates cultural identify and recognises the heritage values of a place.

Character

Quality urban design reflects and enhances the distinctive character and culture of our urban environments, and recognises that character is dynamic and evolving, not static. In this regard, quality urban design:

(a) Reflects the unique identity of each town, city and neighbourhood and strengthens the positive characteristics that make each place distinctive; and
(b) Protects and manages our heritage, including buildings, places and landscapes; and
(c) Protects and enhances distinctive landforms, water bodies and indigenous plants and animals.

Choice

Quality urban design fosters diversity and offers people choice in the urban form of our towns and cities, and choice in densities, building types, transport options, and activities. Flexible and adaptable design provides for unforeseen uses, and creates resilient and robust towns and cities. In this regard, quality urban design:

(a) Ensures urban environments (including open spaces) provide opportunities for all, including people with disabilities; and
(b) Encourages a diversity of activities within mixed use developments and neighbourhoods; and
(c) Supports designs which are flexible, adaptable and which will remain useful over the long-term.

Connections
Good connections enhance choice, support social cohesion, make places lively and safe, and facilitate contact among people. Quality urban design recognises how all networks – streets, railways, walking and cycling routes, services, infrastructure, and communication networks – connect and support healthy neighbourhoods, towns and cities. Places with good connections between activities and with careful placement of facilities benefit from reduced travel times and lower environmental impacts. In this regard, quality urban design:

(a) Creates safe, attractive and secure pathways and links between neighbourhoods and centres; and
(b) Facilitates green networks that link public and private open space; and
(c) Places a high priority on walking, cycling and where relevant, public transport; and
(d) Improves accessibility to public services and facilities.

Creativity
Quality urban design encourages creative and innovative approaches. Creativity adds richness and diversity, and turns a functional place into a memorable place. Creative urban design supports a dynamic urban cultural life and fosters strong urban identities. In this regard, quality urban design:

(a) Builds a strong and distinctive local identity; and
(b) Uses new technology; and
(c) Emphasises innovative and imaginative solutions.

Custodianship
Quality urban design reduces the environmental impacts of our towns and cities through environmentally sustainable and responsive design solutions. Custodianship recognises the lifetime costs of buildings and infrastructure, and aims to hand on places to the next generation in as good or better condition. In this regard, quality urban design:

(a) Maintains landscape values, ecological services and cultural values; and
(b) Considers the ongoing care and maintenance of buildings, spaces, places and networks; and
(c) Manages the use of resources carefully, through environmentally responsive and sustainable design solutions; and
(d) Incorporates renewable energy sources and passive solar gain; and
(e) Incorporates the enhancement of the health and safety of communities.

Collaboration
Towns and cities are designed incrementally as we make decisions on individual projects. Quality urban design requires good communication and co-ordinated actions from all decision-makers: central government, local government, professionals, transport operators, developers and users. In this regard, quality urban design:

(a) Supports a common vision that can be achieved over time; and
(b) Uses a collaborative approach to design that acknowledges the contributions of many different disciplines and perspectives; and
(c) Depends on leadership at many levels.

Part C) Māori urban design principles

Building Mana Whenua Partnerships for Urban Design is a policy brief developed by Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research. It identifies ways urban design can be

informed by mātauranga Māori. Developers, tangata whenua and councils may wish to refer to this document when planning or assessing development projects. *Building Mana Whenua Partnerships for Urban Design* can be located at www.landcareresearch.co.nz.

Appendix 3 – Regionally significant infrastructure

Regionally significant infrastructure includes:

1) Energy, water, communication
   (a) Main pipelines for the distribution or transmission of natural or manufactured gas or petroleum and key delivery points and storage facilities;
   (b) Key facilities required for communication (including telecommunication, broadband, wireless networks and radio);
   (c) The 'national grid' as defined by the Electricity Industry Act 2010 including facilities for the transmission of electricity from the 'national grid' (such as substations, grid injection points etc.) to the 'network';
   (d) Network electricity lines and associated infrastructure that constitute the sub-transmission[25] network;
   (e) Electricity distribution assets which supply essential public services (such as hospitals or lifelines facilities), large (1MW or more) industrial or commercial consumers, 1000 or more consumers or are difficult to replace with an alternative supply if they are compromised";
   (f) Electricity generation facilities (including Ngāwhā geothermal power station and Wairua hydroelectric power station) which supply electricity to either the national grid or the local distribution network;
   (g) Regional and district council water storage, trunk lines and treatment plants;
   (h) Regional and district council wastewater trunk lines and treatment plants and key elements of the stormwater network including treatment devices;
   (i) Marsden Point oil refinery and truck loading facility.
2) Transport
   (a) State highways;
   (b) Roads as well as walking and cycling facilities that are of strategic significance as identified in the Regional Land Transport Strategy[26];
   (c) Whāngārei, Kaitāia and Bay of Islands airports;
   (d) Installations and equipment for air navigation;
   (e) Northport, including the adjoining land used for the movement and storage of cargo;
   (f) Railway lines and associated railway facilities.
3) Significant social and community facilities:

[25] Sub-transmission means electricity infrastructure which directly conveys, or is intended to directly convey, large quantities of electricity from point to point. Typically such electricity conveyance is across cities, districts or regions between Grid Exit Points and Zone Substations. For the avoidance of doubt, sub-transmission includes assets which were part of the national grid but are no longer owned by Transpower and new assets which perform the function of transmission but are not owned by Transpower.
[26] See maps below.

(a) Flood management / protection schemes managed by regional and / or district councils;

(b) Public hospitals;

(c) The Northland Events Centre and Kensington Stadium;

(d) Northland Region Corrections Facility;

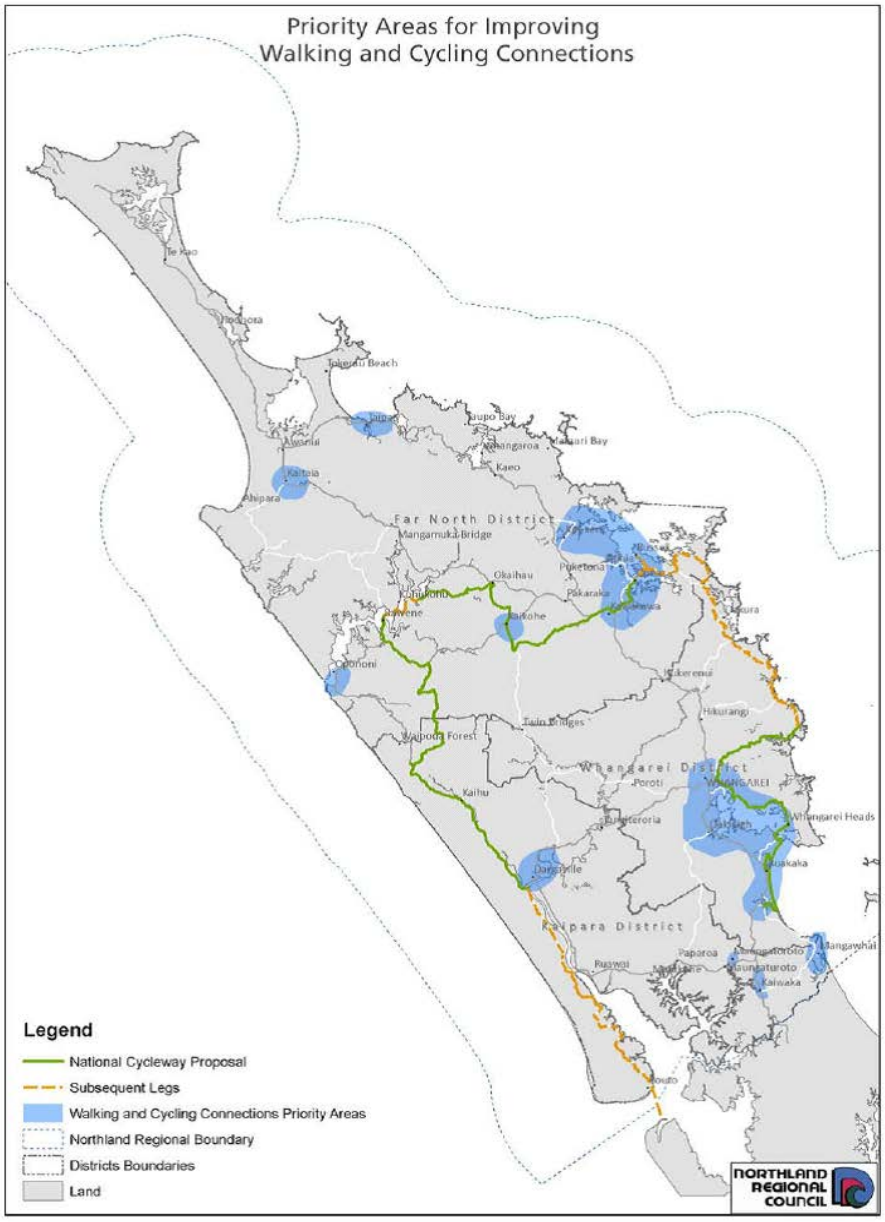
(e) Northland Polytechnic – (NorthTech) main campuses and Auckland University Faculty of Education – Whāngārei;

(f) Puwera Regional Landfill Facility.

Regional Land Transport Strategy Maps – Strategic Tourist Routes

Regional Land Transport Strategy Maps – Strategic Freight Routes

Regional Land Transport Strategy Maps – National Cycleway Proposal



Appendix 4 – Outstanding natural features

Appendix 4 identifies those natural features that are likely to warrant being identified as outstanding natural features but further work is required to map their spatial extent.

Outstanding natural features (ONF's) and landscapes are a matter of national importance in Section 6(b) of the Resource management Act 1991 and are to be protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. This is reinforced in Policy 15 of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. In order to retain the scientific, educational and amenity values of these features, those at risk have – where practicable – been identified on the Proposed Regional Policy Statement Maps (these are listed in the 'Outstanding Natural Features – Methodology Report'). The major source of information has been the "Inventory (and maps) of Important Geological Sites and Landforms in the Northland Region", Geological Society of New Zealand, edited by J Kenny and B Hayward (1995). This inventory identifies the best examples of Northland's unique geology and landforms. Examples include fossil beds, volcanic cones and lava formations. It was compiled using the combined knowledge and advice of a large sector of the specialist geological, geomorphological, speleological and soil science communities of New Zealand.

The inventory provides a ranking of significance and vulnerability for each identified site. The significance ranking provides three levels:
A International
B National
C Regional.

A vulnerability classification (1 - 4) is also assigned to each feature, depending on its perceived susceptibility to human activities:
1 Highly vulnerable to complete destruction or major modification by humans;
2 Moderately vulnerable to modification by humans;
3 Unlikely to be damaged by humans; and
4 Could be improved by human activity / has been destroyed.

However, the inventory includes a number of features that do not warrant protection as outstanding natural features. It also does not provide maps of all features listed. The Proposed Regional Policy Statement maps have only included those features that:

1. Are natural – the inventory includes a number of features that are the result of human activity (for example, mine relics). These are not considered outstanding natural features for the purpose of section 6(b) RMA and are not included in the RPS maps.

2. Are of regional significance and vulnerable and / or of national or international significance – features that rank C3-4 have not been mapped, however, those of national or international significance that rank 3 have been included. Features of regional significance that have a relatively low vulnerability ranking and are unlikely to be damaged by humans have not been identified on the maps, nor has any feature with a vulnerability rank of 4 been included, regardless of significance. This is because the risk of inappropriate subdivision, use and development is considered sufficiently low (given their

relatively low vulnerability) that protection is not warranted and may unduly impede social and economic wellbeing for little gain.

3. Are mapped in the inventory – not all of the sites that meet 1 and 2 above have been mapped. The Regional Policy Statement Maps did not include such sites on the maps due to the uncertainty that this brings, however the intention is to assess / map these features at a later date – these features are listed in this Appendix (Appendix 4).

Table 1 below lists those features that meet items 1 and 2 but that have not been mapped to date. These are likely to qualify as outstanding natural features and are to be subject to further assessment and mapping as stated in Method 4.5.4(3). Table 2 lists a number of features that rank C3 but potentially warrant mapping as ONF pending further assessment.

Table 1:
Internationally significant

Reference number	Name
1773	Camp Bay mylonite and schistose Tangihua Range
2051	Puketōtara erionite
2544	Wairere karstic basalt boulders,

Nationally significant

Reference number	Name
2567	Arrow Rocks
2500	Avoca trace fossils
1055	Kamō limestone pinnacles
1412	Kauri Mountain hornfels and metallic mineralisation
2695	Mangaru Range pillow lava - hyaloclastite sequence
1464	Maunganui Bluff basalt
1119	Ngāwhā Springs hydrothermal field
2569	Ohia black shale
2961	One Tree Point relict dunes and beach ridges, Bream Bay
2721	Pandora pillow lava
1141	Poor Knights sea arches and caves
	Pouerua scoria and lava fields (northern side)
1583	Puhipuhi cinnabar
1607	Rehia hornfels with mineral larnite
2358	Runaruna mud volcano
1627	Simpkin's Quarry herschelite
2582	Skull Creek algal limestone
2581	Takahiwai algal limestone
2128	Tauranganui Stream mouth melange
2139	Te Reinga Bay thrust contact
2694	Te Rewa Pt pleistocene fossils
2714	Te Werahi sand dunes
1683	Tokatoka thermal metamorphism with kilchoanite and rankinite
2715	Tom Bowling Bay dune field

1224	Waikari Island "old hat"
679	Waikuku Beach (north) miocene limestone
680	Waikuku Beach (south) miocene limestone
541	Waimamaku, Pinehill Stream miocene fossil molluscs
542	Waimamaku, Taita Stream miocene fossil molluscs
543	Waimamaku, Waimamaku River miocene fossil molluscs
681	Waipapa River outlier of Waitemata sediments, Puketi
557	Waitangi flow gabbroic inclusions
2495	Whāngāpē Harbour entrance gorge
2693	Whangape Pleistocene fossils

Regionally significant (C1 and C2)

Reference number	Name
2382	Abbey Caves and karst, Whāngārei
2720	Ahipara pliocene lignite
2798	Avoca karst
1302	Bushy Point clinoptilolite
419	Crows Nest Quarry melange
2800	Hewlett Point karst, Whāngārei Harbour
230	Hokianga miocene "orbitolite" bed
2801	Kaiikanui basaltic proto-karst, Helena Bay
249	Kaikohe scoria cone
746	Kamo Hot Springs
271	Kawiti scoria cone and Moerewa lava flow
2802	Lake Manuwai karstic basalt, Kerikeri
1071	Lake Ohia Quarry pyrite
2867	Matarau Rd basalt karst
2540	Maungaraho intrusive volcanic breccia
1473	Mititai breccia-filled volcanic neck, Tokatoka
2803	Ngahere Drive solution runnels, Whāngārei
2805	Otaika Valley karstic basalt, Whāngārei
2806	Paradise Quarry karst, Portland, Whāngārei
1148	Puhipuhi stibnite (Mt Mitchell)
2807	Rangiahua karstic basalt, Ōkaihau
2808	Rangiahua sinkholes, Ōkaihau
2809	Stoney Knowe basaltic proto-karst, Helena Bay
1644	Taipa garnet andesite plug / dike
506	Te Pene weathered rhyolite dome
2718	Te Ruatahi dune sequence
1681	Todds Quarry nephelinite
2717	Tokerau Beach dune field
2810	Waikiekie karst
2716	Waikuku Beach dune field
1228	Waiōmio Caves (Kawiti Caves) and limestone pillars
1233	Waipū Caves and karst
2811	Waipū Cove karst
2568	Wairua Falls

Table 2:
Regionally significant (C3)
A number of other features ranked as C3 in the inventory have been identified as warranting further assessment as to the merits of including these as outstanding natural features on maps. These include:

Name
Bream Head stratovolcano
Bream Tail Arch dome
Haruru Falls basalt lava flow
Hikurangi dome (Hikurangi)
Houto spilite (Houtu)
Jellicoe sea cave (Whangaroa)
Koutu giant concretions
Matapia Island sea arch (Ninety Mile Beach)
McLeod Bay, Whāngārei Heads miocene unconformity
Opononi Limestone (South Hokianga Harbour)
Otangaroa Cave (between Mangamuka and Kaeo)
Pahi Greensand-limestone sequence (Pahi Peninsula)
Parakiore dome (Whāngārei)
Paranui Falls (Whāngārei)
Pukekaroro dome (Kaiwaka)
Rainbow Falls (Kerikeri River)
Rawene paleocene limestone (Rawene)
Reserve Point eocene shelf sediments (The Nook, Whāngārei Harbour)
Skull Creek-Mangawhati Pt autochthonous sediments (Whāngārei Harbour)
St Pauls dome-shaped hill (Whangaroa)
Taratara butte (Whangaroa)
Te Pua crater and flows (Kaikohe)
Two Tone Cave (Waipū)
Whāngārei Falls
Whangaroa exfoliation domes (Whangaroa)
Whatuwhiwhi cretaceous sediments (Whatuwhiwhi, Cape Karikari).

Appendix 5 - Areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments

An area of indigenous vegetation or habitat(s) of indigenous fauna is significant if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

Note:
i) These criteria are intended to be applied by suitably qualified and experienced ecologists.
ii) The meaning of underlined italicised terms are described in ' ***Appendix 5 Definitions*** *'.*

1. Representativeness

(a) Regardless of its size, the *ecological site* is largely indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna that is representative, typical or characteristic of the natural diversity at the relevant and recognised ecological classification and scale to which the *ecological site* belongs:
   i. If the *ecological site* comprises largely indigenous vegetation types; and
   ii. Is typical of what would have existed circa 1840; or
   iii. Is represented by faunal assemblages in most of the guilds expected for the habitat type; or

(b) The *ecological site*
   i. Is a large example of indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna, or
   ii. Contains a combination of landform and indigenous vegetation and habitat of indigenous fauna, that is considered to be a good example of its type at the relevant and recognised ecological classification and scale.

2. Rarity / distinctiveness

(a) The *ecological site* comprises indigenous ecosystems or indigenous vegetation types that:
   i. Are either Acutely or Chronically Threatened[27] land environments associated with LENZ Level 4[28]); or
   ii. Excluding wetlands, are now less than 20% of their original extent; or
   iii. Excluding *man made wetlands*, are examples of the wetland classes[29] that either otherwise trigger Appendix 5 criteria or exceed any of the

[27] Guide for Users of the Threatened Environment Classification, August 2007, Authors: Walker S, Cieraad E, Grove P, Lloyd K, Myers S, Park T, Porteous T, for Landcare Research New Zealand Ltd.
[28] Landcare Research in Land Environments New Zealand (LENZ).
[29] Johnson P., Gerbeaux P. 2004. Wetland types in New Zealand. Department of Conservation, Wellington.

following area thresholds[30] (boundaries defined by Landcare delineation tool[31]);

a) Saltmarsh greater than 0.5 hectare in area; or
b) Shallow water (lake margins and rivers) greater than 0.5 hectare in area; or
c) Swamp greater than 0.4 hectare in area; or
d) Bog greater than 0.2 hectare in area; or
e) Wet Heathlands greater than 0.2 hectare in area; or
f) Marsh; Fen; Ephemeral wetlands or Seepage / flush greater than 0.05 hectares in area.

(b) Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna that supports one or more indigenous taxa that are threatened, at risk, data deficient or uncommon, either nationally or at the relevant ecological scale.

(c) The *ecological site* contains indigenous vegetation or an indigenous taxon that is:
   i. Endemic to the Northland-Auckland region; or
   ii. At its distributional limit within the Northland region;

(d) The *ecological site* contains indigenous vegetation or an association of indigenous taxa that:
   i. Is distinctive of a restricted occurrence; or
   ii. Is part of an *ecological unit* that occurs on an originally rare ecosystem[32]; or
   iii. Is an indigenous ecosystem and vegetation type that is naturally rare or has developed as a result of an unusual environmental factor(s) that occur or are likely to occur in Northland; or
   iv. Is an example of nationally or regionally rare habitat as recognised in the New Zealand Marine Protected Areas Policy.

3. Diversity and pattern

(a) Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna that contains a high diversity of:
   i. Indigenous ecosystem or habitat types; or
   ii. Indigenous taxa;

(b) Changes in taxon composition reflecting the existence of diverse natural features or ecological gradients; or

(c) Intact ecological sequences.

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[30] The area thresholds for wetlands types in these criteria have been developed by ecologists to act as a trigger to identify indigenous wetlands, which due to their scale alone are likely to have significant biodiversity value above this size threshold. Wetlands of a smaller size may also be considered significant if other criteria are met (such as the presence of threatened species).

[31] Landcare Research, March 2014. A vegetation tool for wetland delineation in New Zealand http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/71949/vegetation_tool_wetland_delineation.pdf

[32] New Zealand's historically rare terrestrial ecosystems set in a physical and physiognomic framework Peter A. Williams, Susan Wiser, Bev Clarkson and Margaret C. Stanley December 2007, Landcare Research (Williams et al 2007).
Landcare Research hold a database of naturally rare (also known as 'originally or historically rare' or 'naturally uncommon') ecosystems and this excludes permanently wet areas of water bodies and below mean high water springs: http://newzealandecology.org/nzje/2829.pdf. On request Landcare Research can confirm where these ecosystems are known to be present.

4. Ecological context

(a) Indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna is present that provides or contributes to an important ecological linkage or network, or provides an important buffering function; or

(b) The *ecological site* plays an important hydrological, biological or ecological role in the natural functioning of riverine, lacustrine, palustine, esturine, plutonic (including karst), geothermal or marine system; or

(c) The *ecological site* is an important habitat for critical life history stages of indigenous fauna including breeding / spawning, roosting, nesting, resting, feeding, moulting, refugia or migration staging point (as used seasonally, temporarily or permanently).

Appendix 5 Definitions

Ecological site: the area under assessment comprising one or more ecological units. Ecological sites are comparable with each other at relevant and recognised scales within the landscape. Current ecological classification systems include the ecological districts framework, freshwater biogeographical units and LENZ, and are expected to evolve in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments as new information and technology develops.

Ecological unit: Any combination of indigenous vegetation types (or suite of interrelated types) plus the landform they occur on. The Ecological Unit may include exotic vegetation types where they support indigenous fauna.

Man made wetlands*:* These are wetlands developed deliberately by artificial means or have been constructed on sites where:
a) Wetlands have not occurred naturally previously; and
b) The current vegetation cover cannot be delineated as indigenous wetland; or
c) Man made wetlands have been previously constructed legally.

Man made wetlands do not include *induced wetlands*; *reverted wetlands* or wetlands created for conservation purposes for example as a requirement of resource consent.

Examples of man made wetlands include wetlands created and subsequently maintained principally for or in connection with:
a) Effluent treatment and disposal systems; or
b) Stormwater management; or
c) Water storage; or
d) Other artificial wetlands and water bodies including or open drainage channels (that have been legally established) such as those in drainage schemes).

These may contain emergent indigenous vegetation such as mangroves, rushes and sedges.

Induced wetlands: These are wetlands that have formed naturally on ecological sites where wetlands did not previously exist, as a result of human activities such as construction of roads, railways, bunds etc. While such wetlands have not been constructed for a specific purpose, they can be considered to be artificial in many cases given they arise through physical alteration of hydrology through mechanical human modification.

However these should be assessed on their ecological merits i.e. are not excluded from any Appendix 5 significance criteria.

Reverted wetlands: Where a wetland reverts over time (e.g. stock exclusion allows a wetland to revert to a previous wetland state). In this instance, the wetland has not been purposefully constructed by mechanical change to hydrological conditions. Indigenous wetlands of this sort should be treated as natural wetlands and not excluded from any Appendix 5 significance criteria.

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