

8.0 Monitoring

Introduction and Issues

The Council is required under Section 75 of the RMA to state in its District Plan the procedures to be used to monitor the effectiveness of the Plan, and procedures for reviewing the issues, objectives, policies and methods outlined in the Plan. Section 35 of the RMA also outlines monitoring requirements that territorial authorities must undertake, including:

- the State of the Environment;
- the suitability and effectiveness of the District Plan;
- the exercise of Council functions, powers or duties delegated to it under the RMA; and
- the exercise of resource consents in the district.

Information obtained from monitoring the state of the environment, resource consent conditions, and procedural matters contributes to the review and on-going monitoring of the District Plan.

Monitoring is an important stage in the 'resource management process' as it completes the policy cycle (between policy development and implementation) and provides many additional benefits beyond fulfilling Council's statutory requirements. These benefits include providing data to facilitate improved policies and methods, better informed decision making, increased awareness of environmental issues within the district, and the establishment of comprehensive baseline and trend information systems. In addition, analysis of monitoring information provides an opportunity for Council to act and make improvements concerning the District Plan and other planning tools.

The principal issues regarding monitoring in Hamilton are:

- **A lack of 'State of the Environment' monitoring means that there is a limited amount of information against which environmental changes can be compared.** Currently there is a limited amount of environmental information for Hamilton City therefore monitoring needs to be undertaken to establish a baseline for future comparison. Baseline information about the state of the environment is vital for assessing what changes are occurring so that comparisons can be made between past and present, and Council policy directions can be reviewed.
- **There is a lack of integration within Hamilton City Council and between Waikato Regional Council and other Local Authorities, government agencies and other research organisations causing a duplication of and limited access to monitoring information.** Many units within Council and other external agencies have monitoring responsibilities and gather information on elements of the environment, but there is little integration between them to co-ordinate strategies and methods, share information, and utilise results. Information gathered through monitoring also needs to be collated and integrated so that it is readily accessible and can be utilised by different organisations and the public.

- **The minimum amount of monitoring that has been undertaken on permitted activity performance standards limits the ability to monitor the effectiveness of the District Plan.** Much of the monitoring being undertaken by Council is in response to complaints, while little monitoring is focussed upon permitted activity performance standards. Compliance monitoring of resource consents and performance standards under the District Plan is needed so that the effectiveness of the Plan can be ascertained and policy changes made to enhance the practical implementation of the Plan.

Objective 8.0.1 District Plan Monitoring

To monitor the suitability and effectiveness of the District Plan, and provide an information base to ensure that the issues, objectives, policies and methods contained in the Plan are relevant.

Policies

- a) Develop monitoring programmes which include baseline monitoring and information on the changes occurring in Hamilton City's environment.
- b) Undertake regular liaison with other monitoring agencies within the region and the Council and promote the sharing of information, monitoring methodologies and results.
- c) Undertake the collection, analysis and reporting on information related to the anticipated environmental results and key issues contained within the District Plan.
- d) Report regularly to the community on the State of the Environment, District Plan performance, compliance information, and procedural performance.
- e) Undertake regular reviews of the administrative procedures of the District Plan.

Reasons

Information is a key requirement for effective resource management, and monitoring is one technique used to gather this information. Monitoring the state of the environment will provide valuable information which can be used in the development of future resource strategies, and provide indications of the effectiveness of current Council strategies and policies by comparing results against baseline information. This information will aid in the review and refinement of provisions established within the District Plan, and also reveal resource issues that have arisen since the preparation of the Plan.

The sharing of information and monitoring methods between authorities creates an integrated approach. This is advantageous because of increased efficiency, due to the utilisation of information already gathered, and the improvement of methods and techniques used. The public also needs to be regularly informed of environmental issues, changes, and results, so that they can be involved in the development of new policies and initiatives, and understand the effectiveness of current strategies.

The outcomes of the District Plan, particularly through the resource consent process, need to be monitored, reviewed, and communicated, so that changes can be made when objectives, policies, or methods are not appropriate in achieving Council's goal of sustainable management.

Methods

The Monitoring objective and policies will be implemented through the following methods:

- **Hamilton City Council Monitoring Reports** - outline District Plan consent statistics and highlight key issues relating to the implementation of Plan provisions.
- **Responding to Complaints and Enforcement Procedures** - including response to breaches of the District Plan and resource consent conditions, the carrying out of investigations of incidents, and undertaking enforcement action when appropriate.
- **Monitoring Programmes for the Anticipated Environmental Results of this District Plan** - will be developed, to enable regular reviews of the provisions and procedures of the District Plan, and the provision of publicly available reports on Plan performance.
- **State of the Environment Reporting** - will result in a compilation of information on the health of and changes in Hamilton City's environment.
- **Integrated State of the Environment Monitoring and Reporting Project** - has established an integrated response from agencies in the Waikato region to monitoring issues and future planning.
- **Internal Databases and Information Systems** - will allow information to be easily identified and accessible.
- **Hamilton City Sustainability Indicators** - encompass environmental, social, and economic elements which can be used to measure the city's progress towards the visions, goals and outcomes in Hamilton's Strategic Plan.
- **Monitoring of Ambient and Nuisance Noise Levels in the City** - will determine adverse noise levels and provide a framework for future noise reduction research.

Anticipated Environmental Results

The following environmental results are anticipated:

- A comprehensive and widely accessible information base on the state of Hamilton City's environment.
- Increased understanding of the environmental issues in Hamilton City.
- Effective objectives, policies, and methods within the District Plan.
- An integrated approach to environmental monitoring.
- Efficient and effective administrative procedures.

