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**REPORT 1**  
*(1215/52/IM)*

## **SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE WELLINGTON REGION 2008**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

This report presents a submission on the draft Wellington Regional Policy Statement (RPS) for approval.

### **2. Executive Summary**

The RPS provides the overarching regulatory framework for promoting the sustainable management of natural and physical resources for the Wellington Region.

In preparation for its ten year review, Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) has put together a draft RPS for comment. Council provided earlier comment on a pre-draft of the RPS in August 2007.

The status of the draft RPS provides an opportunity for Council to influence the RPS prior to its formal notification under the Resource Management Act 1991.

In summary, the overall direction and content of the draft RPS is supported and is seen as an improvement on both the pre-draft RPS and the current RPS.

There are however, several key issues for Council to consider in relation to the draft RPS, including:

- The additional work the Council will be expected to undertake to give effect to the policies
- The need for the alignment of the RPS with the proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement
- Concerns that not enough attention has been given to the practice of minimising energy consumption outside of the transport sector
- The need for a policy on sustainable rural and lifestyle subdivision.

### **3. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree that the submission on the draft Regional Policy Statement be forwarded to the Greater Wellington Regional Council for their consideration.*

3. *Authorise the Chief Executive and the Environment Portfolio Leader to make any minor editorial changes to the submission required as a result of Council discussion.*

#### **4. Background**

The Resource Management Act 1991 requires each Regional Council to prepare a RPS, covering a 10 year period. The current RPS for the Wellington Region was finalised in 1995.

As a result of the latest amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991, District Plans are now required to *give effect* to RPS once it is notified. The requirement to 'give effect to' is not defined but is generally taken to mean that the District Plans should actively implement the provisions of the RPS which have been identified for action.

By providing the overarching regulatory framework for promoting the sustainable management of natural and physical resources for the Wellington Region, the RPS has an important role in defining the way we manage our city.

In preparation for the ten year review, Greater Wellington Regional Council is seeking feedback on a draft RPS. The deadline for submissions on the draft RPS is 16 May 2008. Council provided earlier comment on a pre-draft RPS in August 2007.

Comments on the draft RPS will be used to prepare a proposed RPS, which will be notified later this year. The proposed RPS will have immediate effect, and the Council will need to consider it in its resource management decision making.

Once the RPS is proposed, the process becomes more formal. The Council will however be able to make a submission on any part of the proposed RPS and may speak about the submission at a hearing. The proposed RPS can however only be changed in response to submissions and submitters have the right to appeal decisions on their submission to the Environment Court.

#### **5. Discussion**

The attached submission (Appendix 1) outlines a range of process and content issues with the draft RPS. This has been prepared with input from relevant Council directorates.

The submission provides an introductory comment followed by specific comments on each topic area. An additional comment is provided on the District Plan implications of the policies.

While there is strong support for the general scope and content of the draft RPS, there are several areas that may need improvement.

## **5.1 Summary of key points by section**

- **General Comments**

The overall direction and content of the draft RPS is strongly supported however recommendations have been made regarding the formatting and layout of the document. It is also recommended that the introductory chapter refers to the role of the Wellington Regional Strategy in setting the policy direction on regional form.

- **District Plan implications**

One of the key concerns raised in the submission is the additional work that the Council will be expected to undertake to give effect to the policies. Many of the policies will require extensive research and analysis. The Council therefore requests that the GWRC acknowledge the significant additional workload that will be generated by the RPS and that the implementation of the requirements will of necessity be ongoing from the time of the next review and beyond.

- **Air**

This section is supported.

- **Coastal Environment**

This section is supported subject to concerns in a few areas, including:

- The need for a clear definition of 'compromised natural character'
- The alignment of the criteria with the proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement
- Endorsement of a consistent region wide approach to managing effects on coastal water quality from stormwater and wastewater systems.

- **Energy, Infrastructure and Waste**

This section is supported however there are concerns that not enough attention has been given to the practice of minimising energy consumption outside of the transport sector. It is also suggested that there should be more clear and concise monitored measures and targets for energy. Additionally, there needs to be more clarity on the intent and relevance of the regionally significant infrastructure section and more emphasis placed on the level of detail and accuracy in the waste section.

- **Freshwater**

This section is supported subject to comments about water conservation and demand management, discharge to land and integrated catchment management. The need for the better provision of guidance and clarity on water quality and receiving environments has also been raised.

- **Historic heritage**

This section is strongly supported with only minor suggestions.

- Indigenous ecosystems

This section is supported subject to terminology changes and specified amendments. Clarification is also needed on the types of biodiversity that the policy is seeking to identify.

- Resource Management issues of significance to Iwi

This section is supported.

- Landscape

This section is supported subject to recommendations to ensure greater consistency and clarity around its requirements.

- Natural Hazards

This section is supported subject to concerns in a few areas, including:

- the need to clarify the scope of policy 26 on avoiding subdivision and development in high hazard risk areas
- justification for 100 year flood hazard mapping (verses Council's own 50 year flood hazard mapping) and clarification of GWRC's role in investigating 100 year flood hazard levels.
- clarification as to whether the affect of a tsunami is included in the definition of coastal inundation.

- Regional Form

This section draws from the Wellington Regional Strategy and is strongly supported, subject to minor changes and the inclusion of a policy on sustainable rural and lifestyle subdivision.

- Soils and Minerals

This section is supported with only minor suggestions.

## **6. Conclusion**

The submission on the draft RPS (Appendix 1) has been developed with officer input from across the Council.

While there is general support for the directions and content of the draft RPS, there are a number of issues that have to be addressed. To this effect, the submission highlights key concerns and suggests where changes could be made to improve the overall content of the draft RPS.

*Contact Officer: Janna Murray, Policy Advisor, City Planning*

## **Supporting Information**

### **1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome**

*The comments in the submission supports Council's overall vision of Creative Wellington – Innovation Capital, and supports the strategic outcomes for Council as set out in its 10 year LTCCP.*

### **2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact**

*The comments in the submission are consistent with the strategic and budgetary outcomes for Council as set out in its 10 year LTCCP.*

### **3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations**

*Comments in the submission take account of Treaty of Waitangi considerations and support a proactive approach to consultation with Iwi.*

### **4) Decision-Making**

*This is not a significant decision.*

### **5) Consultation**

#### **a) General Consultation**

*All affected parties within Council have been consulted with in the development of this submission on the draft RPS.*

#### **b) Consultation with Maori**

*Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira Inc are making their own submission supporting the draft RPS.*

*Contact was made with the Wellington Tenth Trust however due to time constraints no direct consultation on the submission occurred prior to the completion of the report.*

### **6) Legal Implications**

*N/A.*

### **7) Consistency with existing policy**

*The submission in this report has been developed to ensure consistency of existing policy.*

## GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL Draft REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT

### **SUBMISSION FROM WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL**

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#### **1. Introduction**

Wellington City Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Regional Policy Statement (RPS). This is an important document in that it sets out the overall framework for sustainable management for the Wellington Region.

The Council supports the overall direction and content of the draft RPS. In particular, Council acknowledges the way the draft RPS has taken into consideration our earlier comments on the proposed draft RPS.

Specific comments are set out below. The first section (2) provides general comments on the draft RPS. The second section (3) then provides an outline of the District Plan implications of the policies. The remaining sections (4 to 14) provide comments on content issues associated with each subject matter covered in the draft RPS.

#### **2. General Comments**

##### **Format**

The readability and format of the first chapter (Promoting sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the Wellington region) remains confusing. This is in part due to the lack of generic headings. Without general headings (e.g. Introduction, Background) the reader is confused about what each chapter is about.

##### Action sought:

*Put a new heading in Chapter One to inform readers that this is about background and context.*

##### **Wellington Regional Strategy**

While there is comprehensive discussion about the statutory policy and planning framework for the Wellington region in the first chapter, there is no mention of the role of the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) in setting the strategic policy setting for the RPS. The WRS has been important both in terms of policy direction on regional form and the overall promotion of sustainable management – this should be referred to in the introduction section (words and/or diagram).

##### Action sought:

*Add a section on the role of the WRS in setting the policy direction on regional form and helping to achieve the overall promotion of sustainable management*

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*for the region. Greater Wellington should also consider illustrating the link to the Regional Land Transport Strategy, given that policy links have been made.*

## **Objectives**

From a policy perspective, the Objectives of the RPS are important as they set the high level outcomes for promoting sustainable management of the region. Some of the objectives on regional form (such as Objective 27) are quite detailed and lengthy – and relevant for decision making by regional and local government agencies. By only referring to the objectives in the table, their importance tends to be diminished.

### Action sought:

*Include the objectives and associated discussion in the introductory section of each issue.*

## **3. District Plan Implications**

There are a total of 23 policies in the draft RPS that require attention through the District Plan through the inclusion of specific policies and/or rules. These policies have been examined and it has been found that the majority are being already being dealt with in our District Plan to a level that it is believed will satisfy the Regional Council.

The policies that will likely require significant additional work are:

- Policy 5: Identifying the landward extent of the coastal environment
- Policy 12: Promote energy efficient design, small scale renewable energy and provide for energy efficient alterations
- Policy 24: Identification of outstanding natural features and landscapes and notable landscapes
- Policy 25: Protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes and maintenance and enhancement of notable landscapes
- Policy 26: Avoiding subdivision and development in high hazard risk areas (in particular erosion and inundation prone shoreline and landslip prone slopes)

The overriding issue is that the inclusion of policies and/or rules on the above matters will require attention at the time of the next review of the District Plan. The review of the Wellington City District Plan is due to commence in July 2010. While it is considered that the issues are valid and should appropriately be addressed in the Plan it is possible that the work necessary to justify the new provisions may not be as comprehensive as desirable for the next review. The Council again requests that the Regional Council acknowledge the significant additional workload that will be generated by the Regional Policy Statement and

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that the implementation of the requirements will of necessity be on an ongoing basis from the time of the next review and beyond.

## **Resource Consent Implications**

There are 24 policies in the draft RPS that the Council, *when considering an application for a resource consent, notice of requirement ... shall have particular regard to* – followed by criteria under the particular policy. The number of criteria in each policy varies between 1 and 12 and some have considerable information in their explanation section.

Seven of the policies have clauses indicating that policies shall cease when a District Plan has included specific policies and/or rules and the plan change is fully operative.

Seventeen of the policies to be used when considering applications for resource consent etc, have no retirement clause. They will need to be used even after the Council prepares new district plan policies and rules as required in the draft RPS. The consideration of a large number of policies and criteria under a RPS, each time the Council assesses a resource consent, will require significant additional work.

The policies without a retirement clause are:

- Policy 33: Coastal areas, features or landscapes
- Policy 36: Protection of physical and ecological processes in the coastal environment
- Policy 38: Management purposes of fresh water bodies
- Policy 39: Stormwater management
- Policy 40: Importance of aquatic ecosystem function and other values
- Policy 42: Water needs for new subdivision and land use consents
- Policy 45: Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, claims, reports and settlement decisions
- Policy 46: Avoiding adverse effects of natural hazards
- Policy 48: Minimise the effects from hazard mitigation measures
- Policy 49: Water needs for new subdivision and land use consents
- Policy 50: Public access to and along the coast, lakes and rivers with significant values
- Policy 51: Regional urban design principles for urban development

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- Policy 52: Development to support a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form
- Policy 53: Development that integrates land use with transportation
- Policy 54: Sequencing of land use and coordination with funding
- Policy 55: Management of Regional Focus Areas
- Policy 57: Significant mineral resources

The Council acknowledges the importance of the matters addressed in the individual policies. At the same time it is concerned about the significant additional workload for its resource consents team.

Action sought:

*The Council requests that the Regional Council consider how additional assessments under the Regional Policy Statement can be reduced. One option is for all the policies to have a retirement clause to allow them to drop away once appropriate changes have been made to the District Plan.*

**Additional matter**

In Section 3.2 the heading states “Matters to be given particular regard to when assessing and deciding on resource consents, notices of requirement, and plan changes, variations or reviews”.

However, none of the subsequent policies refer to District Plan Reviews, and in the context of Section 3.2 it is considered that plan reviews in fact need not be referenced. The matters to be dealt with at the time of the next plan review are covered in Policies 1-33 in section 3.1.

Action sought:

*That the reference to plan reviews be deleted from the heading to section 3.2.*

## 4. Air quality

The Council supports this section.

## 5. Coastal environment (including public access)

**Policy 3: Protection of the values of nationally and regionally significant areas in the coastal environment**

The Council supports this policy and the areas listed. We note that from a local perspective there are a number of other important sites of ecological and landform value, but recognise that the regional perspective may differ and that there are other mechanisms of recognition and protection. There are also some significant information gaps for the sites and the areas listed as regionally significant. Specifically:

- Site 23 - Karori stream to Owhiro Bay Quarry (p142). This site has significant historic values that need to be recognised. The site is

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identified in the Wellington District Plan as a Maori precinct because of a large number of significant sites and evidence of settlements. This needs to be identified and detailed in this report.

- Site 25 - Tapu Te Ranga Island. A site of great cultural importance to iwi which is not recognised in the statement of significance. It is identified in the Wellington District Plan as part of a Maori precinct, and is a Wahi Tapu under the Historic Places Trust (Register No 7652).

Action sought:

*Revise the statements of significance and identify historic heritage value.*

The Council is also concerned about the inclusion of all of the harbour in Map 2 as a site of significance (marine) in regard to waterfront development for example Wellington Waterfront and Shelly Bay. The application of this item of significance could be used to challenge future development of the waterfront areas.

Action sought:

*Map 2 needs to show clearly the boundary of the marine sites of significance. In particular it needs to specifically exclude waterfront development e.g. Wellington Waterfront and Shelly Bay.*

## **Policy 4: New subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment**

The explanation for this policy states: “District plans shall include policies that encourage new subdivision, use and development in the coastal environment to be located in areas where the natural character has already been compromised”. It is unclear as to how compromised natural character is to be defined.

Action sought:

*More clearly define compromised natural character in this policy.*

## **Policy 5: Identifying the landward extent of the coastal environment**

This is an important matter for the city as it will determine how much of the urban area will be covered by the coastal environment and therefore potentially subject to additional restrictions or limitations.

The identification of the landward extent of the coastal environment is also a requirement of the proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (PNZCPS) and it is considered important to ensure that the criteria use is consistent in both documents.

One notable difference is that the PNZCPS excludes the effect of tsunamis when defining the coastal environment but the draft RPS mentions land affected by coastal inundation. It is not clear whether inundation includes the effect of tsunamis or not. This is a very important issue because a significant portion of the city’s urban area (including much of the CBD) could be affected by tsunami and therefore fall within the coastal environment. If this is the case then Policy 26 will require the Council to include policies and rules to avoid subdivision and development in such high risk areas.

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Action sought:

*That the criteria under Policy 5 be aligned with the proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement and that in particular it be clarified that criteria (c) relating to coastal inundation does not include inundation arising from tsunami.*

**Policy 6: Maintenance or enhancement of coastal water quality**

The Council has committed considerable resources to ensuring appropriate wastewater and stormwater controls are in place to avoid adverse effect on the coastal marine area.

The Council supports this policy however would like to see a more consistent regional response to wastewater treatment standards, which takes into consideration effects on the receiving environment.

The policy mentions that the regional coastal plan shall include policies, rules and/or methods to require coastal water quality to be maintained or enhanced. The Council looks forward to appropriate regional water and environmental quality guidelines to support strategies for protecting the aquatic receiving environments being included in the regional coastal plan.

Action sought:

*That under Policy 6 clearer guidance be provided on the regional standards to be attained for water quality and receiving environments. Quantitative and explicit standards and requirements should be presented for water quality and coastal environmental monitoring policies.*

*Policy 6 and the Regional Coastal Plan must include a consistent regional approach to wastewater treatment which will support GWRC's aims and objectives.*

**Anticipated environmental results (AER) for objective 6**

The Council supports the direction of this objective and its first AER subject to wider consideration of environmental conditions prior to sampling. For example a heavy rain event or high tides and strong winds can push rotting leaves, seaweed or other debris against a beach thus affecting water quality. The Ministry for the Environment/Ministry of Health guidelines provide an indication of the general condition of the water column at the time of sampling. Follow up monitoring is required to identify the permanence of an identified guideline exceedance.

Action sought:

*This AER should be amended to take account of environmental condition and read as follows or similar:*

*“By 2011, during the summer bathing season (1 November to 31 March inclusive) follow up samples taken in response to an “action level” (280 enterococci/100mL) of the Ministry for the Environment/Ministry of Health (2003) microbiological water quality guidelines for marine recreational areas shall comply with routine surveillance guidelines indicating no further management action is required.”*

## **Policy 62: Restoration of natural character in the coastal environment.**

The Council supports this policy and the revised methodologies.

## **6. Energy, infrastructure and waste**

### **Energy**

The only stated regionally significant issues regarding energy are “sources of energy vulnerable to supply disruptions” and “fossil fuels used to meet increasing demand for energy are contributing to climate change”. The Council feels that there are other significant issues facing the Wellington region with regard to energy and the associated greenhouse gas emissions. Issues pertinent to the Wellington region include:

- the growing demand for energy throughout the region
- the region’s heavy dependence on oil for transport energy
- the volatility in world oil markets making road transport more costly
- reversing the growth trend in energy-related greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors within the region.

In general, the Council agrees with the draft RPS stated objective associated with Energy (Objective 9). The Council has developed policies on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions that mirror the statements made in the draft RPS.

The Council believes that not enough attention has been given to the practice of minimising energy consumption outside of the transport sector. Greenhouse gas emission resulting from energy consumption within the residential, commercial and industrial built environment remains to be a key contributor to New Zealand’s greenhouse gas emission profile. The RPS should specifically discuss mitigating measures that are necessary to reverse the growing trend.

The Council is generally supportive of the energy policies in the draft RPS but believes it is important to specify tangible and measurable outcomes. The Council believes that more clear and concise monitored measures and targets within the energy policies are necessary.

#### Action sought:

*Include clear and concise monitored measures and targets on energy within the RPS.*

### **Infrastructure**

The Council would like more clarity on the intent and relevance of the regionally significant infrastructure chapter especially the second significant issues statement.

#### Action sought:

*WCC would like clarification on the intent of issue 2 – regionally significant infrastructure.*

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*The last sentence of the second significant issues statement should be amended to read as follows;*

*“The planning, management, use and operation of infrastructure can be adversely affected when incompatible land uses occur under, over, on, or alongside.”*

## **Waste**

The draft RPS aligns with some key aspects of the Council's Solid Waste Management Plan and related Council waste policy. Specifically, the Council supports the overall objective of reducing the waste generated by society, the need to preserve landfill space and the need to limit the negative environmental effects of waste through improved diversion programmes.

The Council agrees with some of the methods outlined in the draft provisions that should be enhanced throughout the Wellington Region, including:

- measuring waste
- promoting composting
- on-site pollution prevention programmes
- working with business.

The Council has some specific concerns regarding the level of detail of the RPS. The RPS briefly mentions the lack of suitable markets for some recyclable material but there is little mention of the current recycling markets. For example, the RPS does not comment on the life-cycle of the region's current recycling system and whether sending recycled materials to overseas markets reduces the overall environmental benefits of recycling.

### Action sought:

*Include comment on the life-cycle of the region's current recycling system and whether sending recycled materials to overseas markets reduced the overall environmental benefits of recycling.*

There is also no comment on the benefits derived from regional cooperation with waste management in terms of aligning Waste Management Plans and joint-ventures with waste minimisations initiatives, as foreshadowed in the WRS.

### Action sought:

*Include comment on the benefits derived from regional cooperation with waste management.*

## **Comments on Policies**

The Council is generally supportive of the intent and direction of policies 8, 10, 11, 12, 37 and 63 on energy and waste reduction. However, some of the explanations of the policies are incomplete.

### Action sought:

*Apply more specific measurable outcomes and targets to the policies on energy and waste reduction.*

## **Policy 8: Recognition of the benefits from regionally significant infrastructure and renewable energy**

The Council already has approved District Plan Change 32 on Renewable Energy “to encourage efficiency in energy use, and the development and use of energy from renewable sources”. This Plan Change was designed to respond to the Council’s obligations under the Resource Management (Energy and Climate Change) Amendment Act 2004 to consider the following issues in decision making:

- the efficiency of the end use of energy
- the effects of climate change
- the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy.

The Council believes this Plan Change is sufficient in addressing the Draft RPS and we will continue to review the District Plan to identify ways to facilitate the development and uptake of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The Council believes that a more complete definition of renewable energy is needed than the one given in the document and that instead of the wording “external energy supplies”, the RPS could state that the region should reduce “our dependency on *imported energy supplies such as oil, natural gas and coal*”.

### Action sought:

*Change the wording in Policy 8 and 37 from ‘reducing our dependency on external energy supplies’ to ‘reducing our dependency on imported energy supplies such as oil, natural gas and coal.’*

## **Policy 10: Reduce the consumption of non-renewable transport fuels and emission of carbon dioxide from transportation**

The Council is supportive of the policy to promote a reduction in the consumption of non-renewable transport fuels and the emissions of carbon dioxide from transportation in the Regional Land Transport Strategy. The Council believes the RPS can be more explicit in identifying oil as being both “non-renewable” and emissions intensive. The Council believes that the region should only develop regional transport policies and investment that leads to reduced emissions in the long-term.

### Action sought:

*Be more explicit in identifying oil as non-renewable and emissions intensive.*

## **Policy 11: Promote the implementation of travel demand management mechanisms**

The Council is supportive of the policy to have policies in the District Plan that promote travel demand management decisions. The Council is already implementing a thorough travel demand programme and will use the District Plan (where appropriate) to deliver our travel demand objectives. The Council is currently looking to promote infill housing densification along a growth corridor, which will reduce the demand to travel and make active modes like walking more accessible to more people.

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## **Policy 12: Promote energy efficient design, small scale renewable energy and provide for energy efficient alterations**

The Council is supportive of this policy (and supporting methods) but believes there are limitations in how effectively District Plans can deliver meaningful changes to energy efficient design in buildings. The Building Code is a much more powerful tool to influence energy efficient design and energy efficient alterations to subdivisions. Nevertheless, it is important that these principles are promoted in regional and district plans.

## **Policy 37: Benefits of regionally significant infrastructure and renewable energy**

The Council believes its obligations under this policy are covered under policy 8. Again, the Council's District Plan has provisions that consider the benefits of renewable energy on a local and national scale. Refer to comments on Policy 8 in regard to the wording of this policy.

## **Policy 63: Promote efficient use of resources to reduce waste**

The Council is supportive of this policy but believes the policy is incomplete in that it does not focus on the role of regional cooperation with waste management practices nor does it comment on how to improve the current supply chains set-up for recycling (i.e. most of the region's recycled products are sent to Asian markets where the industrial reprocessing practices result in heavy local pollution).

The purpose of the RPS is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the Wellington region. The objective of the waste chapter is to reduce the quantity of waste that is disposed of. Policy 63 states using waste efficiently means reusing unwanted goods that are still 'fit for purpose', recycling new products from waste materials, and recovering resources from waste.

The Council believes rain and grey water should be considered as a resource, rather than a waste that must be disposed of. Rainwater tanks collect the rain that would otherwise be lost as stormwater and store it for later use in the garden, laundry or toilet. Industry can also collect and reuse rainwater in their processes- i.e. for concrete making. This not only eases the demand on the potable water supply, but reduces the risk of flooding during heavy downpours.

The Council supports voluntary re-use of greywater in all buildings for low-risk uses, such as toilet flushing and plant irrigation.

### Action sought:

*That the existing explanation be amended to read as follows:*

*First reduce unnecessary use of resources, including reducing packaging. This is followed by reusing unwanted goods that are still 'fit for purpose' (including rain and greywater), recycling new products from waste materials, recovering resources (such as energy) from waste, before disposing of the remaining waste safely. If resources are used efficiently, the amount of unwanted*

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*materials disposed of at landfills and at sewage treatment plants will be reduced.*

*These comments link to policies 18, 41, 65.*

## **Method 19: Information and guidance on waste management**

### Action sought:

*That the existing text be amended to include or to the like;  
(b) the reuse and recycling of materials including rain and grey water; and*

## **Method 31: Region-wide renewable energy strategy**

The Council strongly supports this method.

## **7. Fresh water (including public access)**

The Council has proactively worked to understand, improve and monitor stormwater quality and its effect on receiving environments especially in the last 15 years.

The Council requests that the introductory section in the fresh water chapter be amended to refer to stormwater discharges that have received little or no treatment affect.

### Action sought:

*The first sentence of fifth paragraph in the introduction should be amended to read as follows-*

*"Urban streams are affected by stormwater discharges which have received little or no treatment affect, especially when there are high proportions of impervious cover (e.g. roofs and roads) in the catchment."*

## **Policy 13: Maintaining and enhancing rivers for aquatic ecosystem health**

The intent of this policy is to benefit aquatic ecosystem health through appropriate provisions in regional plans.

"Ecosystems are not just the natural backdrop to our lives, they are the foundation."

The basis of a healthy freshwater ecosystem is the micro-organisms together with the non-living physical factors of the environment (e.g. channels, riparian areas). This base is important for the overall health of the aquatic ecosystem. For this reason the Council believes that ephemeral streams, watercourses and wetlands should also be covered by this policy not solely rivers.

### Action sought:

*That streams, including intermittent and ephemeral, are added to policy 13 so the existing policy reads as follows: "Regional plans shall include policies, rules and/or methods requiring, as a minimum, that all freshwater bodies are managed for the purpose of maintaining or enhancing aquatic ecosystem health."*

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## **Policy 15: Promoting and managing discharges to land**

The Council recognises Maori views on discharges to surface water. We understand the reasoning behind this policy however discharge to land should be considered when it is the only practical option.

### Action sought:

*That GWRC takes a pragmatic view that discharge to land is not always practical.*

## **Policy 18: Efficient use and water harvesting**

The Council strongly supports conserving water and the direction GWRC are taking by requiring that water is used efficiently, and not wasted. Conserving water will help protect the natural environment, reduce water demand, energy and treatment costs by deferring the need to expand and build new pipes, dams, reservoirs, pumping stations and treatment plants, and help reduce contamination.

The focus of this policy is water efficiency during abstraction, distribution and final use. There is opportunity to broaden the policy to encompass other areas for efficient use and harvesting of water. This would include harvesting rain or greywater for activities that do not need to meet the same stringent standards of a town supply such as toilet flushing, garden watering.

Rainwater and greywater present a huge resource that could be harvested rather than conveyed quickly away.

### Action sought:

*The RPS is an ideal opportunity to promote water conservation and active demand management and for options to be incorporated into District Plans. GWRC should take this opportunity to provide more direct policy and support than just simply encouraging water "is used efficiently and is not wasted".*

These comments are related to Policies 41, 63, 65 also.

## **Policy 38: Management purposes of fresh water bodies**

The Council strongly supports this policy and the establishment of freshwater management classes as a matter to be given particular regard to when accessing and deciding on resource consents, notices of requirements, plan changes, variations or review.

As commented on in Policy 13 Council believes that ephemeral streams, watercourses and wetlands should be managed under the RPS.

The Council's draft Code of Practice for Land Development and the Biodiversity Action Plan (2007) both require that the natural character of streams is to be retained wherever possible.

The Council already promotes design options that include stormwater run off management. Although it needs to be noted that the use of low impact solutions (including the use of soakpits, roadside swales, filter strips and rain gardens) in Wellington City is not always possible due to lack of soakage offered by the

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steep topography and thin clay soils. The Council's Code of Practice for Land Development has been revised and requires the consideration of sustainable stormwater management where conditions allow.

However in greenfield areas that are identified for development through structure plans it is acknowledged that the protection of all ephemeral streams could be problematic and this is recognised in the Councils subdivision design guide. This encourages the consideration of alternative design options.

Action sought:

*That the existing policy be amended to include the following additions and changes to paragraph 3:*

*City and district councils could implement this policy by:*

*requiring first order and/or ephemeral streams to be retained, also requiring setback distances between buildings and rivers, watercourses, wetlands and ephemeral streams to protect riparian areas (except in the case of ephemeral streams where land is identified for future urban development), also requiring roadside swales, filter strips and rain gardens where conditions allow.*

## **Policy 41: Efficient use of water**

The Council strongly supports conserving water and the direction GWRC is taking by requiring water is used efficiently and not wasted. Conserving water will help protect the natural environment, reduce water demand and treatment costs by deferring the need to expand and build new pipes, dams, reservoirs, pump stations and treatment plants, and help reduce contamination.

However the focus of this policy is on efficiency of water take. There is opportunity to broaden the policy to encompass other area for efficient use of water. This would include options for using rain or greywater for activities that do not need to meet the same stringent standards of a town supply such as toilet flushing and garden watering. Using water that has been treated to health standards goes against measures to conserve treated reticulated water and the energy associated with extracting, treating and distributing it.

Action sought:

*The RPS is an ideal opportunity to promote water conservation and active demand management and for options to be incorporated into District Plans. GWRC should take this opportunity to provide more direct policy and support than just simply encouraging water "is used efficiently and is not wasted".*

These comments also relate to Policies 18, 63 and 65.

## **Policy 65: Reducing water demand and wastage of water**

The Council supports this policy and the direction GWRC is taking by requiring water to be used efficiently, and not wasted. Conserving water will help reduce water demand and protect the natural environment.

There is opportunity to broaden the policy to encompass harvesting of rain and grey water for activities that do not need to meet the same stringent standards of a town supply such as toilet flushing, garden watering.

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Action sought:

*That a new clause be added as follows or to the like:*

*(e) promoting rainwater and greywater harvesting and reuse.*

*These comments link to policies 18, 41, 63.*

**Method 13: Information and guidance on water conservation and efficient use**

The Council supports this method but believes there is an opportunity to broaden the policy to encompass harvesting of rain and grey water.

Action sought:

*That the existing text be amended to read as follows:*

*Prepare and disseminate information and guidance on water conservation and the efficient use of water, including best irrigation practices, reusing rain and greywater, crop and soil requirements, irrigation and garden watering management, water efficient household appliances, and planting locally appropriate plants*

*Also extend the list of polices that this method applies to include Policies 18, 41 and 63 as well as 65.*

**Method 28: Whole of catchment approach to works, operations and services**

The Council supports integrated catchment management but believes it could be given more emphasis through the RPS rather than only being mentioned in the method.

Action sought:

*Stronger emphasis on integrated catchment management consideration through the policies and methods of the RPS.*

**Method 32: Regional Stormwater Action Plan**

The Council actively supported GWRC and the development of the regional stormwater action plan. The Council (along with other signatory organisations) agreed to consider action items when developing their strategic plans, work programmes, policy statements and district plans etc. However, the Action Plan does not replace existing programmes or planning tools.

One of the main issues identified in the Stormwater Action Plan is that GWRC does not provide sufficiently clear direction to Local Authorities on stormwater management. This was to be actioned through the stormwater action plan and the RPS review. Simply referring to the action plan in the draft RPS does not provide adequate direction or clarity on stormwater management that territorial authorities need. This voluntary document is of more relevance to passive councils in the region than it is to Wellington City Council.

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The Council supports the stormwater action plan but believe that referring to it in the RPS is inappropriate as it gives too much importance to a voluntary document.

Action sought:

*Reference to the stormwater action plan be deleted or given less importance and the opportunity used to provide guidance and clarity on the regional standards to be attained for water quality and receiving environments.*

**Anticipated environmental results for objective 12**

The Council has proactively worked to understand, improve and monitor stormwater quality and its effect on receiving environments for 15 years. Twelve consents were gained for major outfalls and a programme of works, investigations and monitoring tied into the consent requirements. As these consents come up for renewal, the Council needs to look at the “bigger picture” of what we are trying to achieve and how. To this effect, more clarity and guidance from GWRC on the standards to be attained for water quality and receiving environments would be appreciated.

The sites monitored by GWRC as part of their State of the Environment reporting in Wellington City (Porirua Stream at Glenside, Kaiwharawhara Stream, Karori Stream, Makara Stream) are compared against a range of water quality guidelines, including the ANZECC (2000) guidelines which trigger values for lowland aquatic ecosystems. These guidelines are not ideal for urban streams and there is a need for more appropriate guidelines to be devised which are risk and/or effects based.

It would be valuable for GWRC to identify the work necessary to achieve this objective, particularly in developed catchments.

Action sought:

*The Council would like to see GWRC provide guidance and more clarity on the standards to be attained for water quality and receiving environments. Quantitative and more rigorous quality requirements attached to the anticipated environmental results for Objective 12 should be presented.*

**Anticipated environmental results for objective 13**

The Council appreciate the issues that barriers to fish passage cause. This is encompassed in the Councils draft code of Practice for Land Development and in our Biodiversity Action Plan where the “daylighting” of piped streams and/or construction of fish passes is promoted. However the AER “*There are no new barriers to fish passage and the number of existing impediments will be reduced*” in an urban environment is difficult to ensure.

Action sought:

*GWRC to be practical when assessing barriers to fish passage and where work is considered justified and prioritised on a cost benefit basis.*

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## **Anticipated environmental results for objective 14**

The Council strongly support using water more efficiently and reducing solid and liquid waste.

### Action sought:

*The last AER for this objective is reworded to read as follows-*

*By 2011 the amount of water leaking from water reticulation systems will reduce.*

## **Appendix 2:**

The criteria used to determine whether a river has significant amenity or recreational values is questioned. Does an activity performed on one stretch of a river or stream mean the entire water body is classified according to that usage? What rates of amenity and recreational usage is required before an activity is regarded as “significant”? The Council question Karori Stream as having kayaking and canoeing uses.

### Action sought:

*Review the basis of the classifications to indicate what stretches of a river hold significant amenity value or attract significant recreational usage.*

## **8. Historic heritage**

### **Policy 20: Identification of historic heritage**

The first sentence states:

*Local authorities shall identify historic heritage places, including sites and areas, to be listed in regional and district plans, using one or more of the following criteria...*

Whilst it is noted that the wording has been soften since initial drafts, it is not clear whether local authorities must adopt the criteria stipulated in the RPS word for word or whether they have the ability to write criteria to suit their areas heritage needs based on the RPS criteria.

The Council has interpreted Policy 20 in a broad sense so that when historic heritage places are identified in its District Plan, at least one of the criteria for listing must commonly align with RPS criteria.

### Action sought:

*Clarify intention of Policy 20 to ensure that territorial authorities retain a degree of flexibility with criteria to meet their individual requirements.*

## Policy 21: Protection of historic heritage

The first sentence states:

*District and regional plans shall include policies, rules and/or other methods to protect historic heritage places and areas identified in accordance with Policy 20, from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*

The policy states that local authorities *shall* use policies rules etc *in accordance* with Policy 20 (i.e. the RPS criteria). For the same reasons as above this may not always be appropriate or provide district plan autonomy.

### Action sought:

*Add the following text to the first sentence:*

*District and regional plans shall include policies, rules and/or other methods to protect historic heritage places and areas that are based on, or similar to, the criteria set out in Policy 20, from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.*

## Policy 43: Managing effects on historic heritage

The principle of this policy is now supported as its intent is better understood. However, a small wording addition is recommended that allows for flexibility.

### Action sought:

*Add the following text:*

*When considering an application for a resource consent, notice of requirement, or a change or variation to a district or regional plan, local authorities shall use the criteria in policy 20, or similar criteria to determine whether an activity may affect historic heritage places and areas, and in determining whether an activity is inappropriate have particular regard to: ...*

## 9. Indigenous ecosystems

The third significant issue identified in the introduction is *Ecosystem services are under threat*. It is hardly mentioned again. The one instance seems to be in the objective, through the words a *healthy functioning state*. If the protection of indigenous ecosystems for their services is an important issue, it needs to be reflected in the policies / methods within this section.

It is noted that the term, a *healthy functioning state*, may also be intended to cover the threat to ecosystem processes, described in the second significant issue. This issue is addressed to some extent in the policies.

### Action sought:

*Provide a clearer link between the second and third significant issue and the policies, particularly guidance on what needs to be done to maintain or restore the functioning of ecosystems.*

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## **Objective 16: Maintenance and restoration of significant indigenous ecosystems and habitats**

In regard to the statement under Objective 16: The full range of remaining significant indigenous ecosystems and habitats in the Wellington region are maintained and restored to a healthy functioning state.

‘The full range’ is linked to the explanation in Policy 22. It indicates that the intention is *retaining and restoring a full range of remaining indigenous ecosystems and habitats, and not limiting assessment to retaining only ‘high value’ areas.*

The term ‘full range’ may not adequately communicate what is intended and / or the explanation to Policy 22 doesn’t do a good enough job of communicating that intention.

‘The full range’ suggests protecting a number of examples from of a larger pool of significant indigenous ecosystems and habitats. This won’t be enough to meet the obligations of section 6(c) of the Resource Management Act:

*The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.*

Section 6(c) requires local authorities *to recognise and provide for* the protection of areas that are significant, implying all areas that are identified as significant.

### Action sought:

*Replace ‘full range’ with a more suitable term and an explanation that the objective (and policies) is to recognise and provide for the protection of all areas of significant indigenous ecosystems and habitats.*

## **Policy 22: Identification of indigenous ecosystems, habitats and areas with significant indigenous biodiversity values**

The part of the policy that refers to *areas with significant indigenous biodiversity values* is confusing. It is not clarified by the explanation to the policy. The same words are used in Policy 23 and 44.

The policy can be read two ways (and possibly others):

- Identification of indigenous ecosystems, habitats and areas - all of which have significant indigenous biodiversity values
- Identification of indigenous ecosystems, habitats - along with areas with significant indigenous biodiversity values.

In the first interpretation there is a pool of indigenous ecosystems, habitats and areas from which sites are selected if they have significant biodiversity values. If this is the intended meaning what does the word *area* add? Ecosystems and habitats are both understood to be discrete areas of the larger environment. The repeated use of word *indigenous* adds to the confusion. Are the words

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*indigenous* and *areas* duplicated as a form of insurance? Are they intended for people who have a less than clear understanding of what *ecosystem* and *habitat* mean or the distinction between *indigenous* and *non-indigenous*?

The second interpretation is that there are areas that don't fit with what is scientifically understood to be indigenous ecosystems and habitats. These could be ones where the majority of species are exotic, for example a pine plantation. It could have significant indigenous biodiversity values if it was habitat to one or a few threatened indigenous species. Another less likely possibility is a component of the ecosystem is predominantly indigenous and of high value. Examples might be soil communities or mosses, lichens and other small plants on tree trunks.

*Action Sought:*

*Clarify the types of indigenous biodiversity that the policy is seeking to identify. Do the same for Policies 23 and 44.*

**Policy 23: Protection of indigenous ecosystems, habitats and areas with significant indigenous biodiversity values**

The policy provides no information on how GWRC thinks local authorities should go about protecting biodiversity values. There is nothing in the policy that isn't already required of councils by the Resource Management Act (admittedly councils are somewhat better off because of the criteria for identifying biodiversity under Policy 22).

While they may be seen as contentious by some council's, the principles under Policy 2 (section 5.2) of the earlier draft policy statement would be useful in developing policies, rules and methods in district plans.

*Action Sought:*

*Provide criteria for local authorities developing Plan Changes to protect indigenous biodiversity.*

**Policy 44: Managing effect on indigenous ecosystems, habitats and areas with significant indigenous biodiversity values**

Policy 44 is concerned with matters to have particular regard to when considering a resource consent etc. It lacks general criteria for considering the adverse effect of the proposed activity on significant indigenous biodiversity. It is needed for councils to make a decision on whether an activity is inappropriate, or not.

The word *protecting* in criteria (e) needs some clarification. *Protecting indigenous biodiversity* is arguably the same thing as *avoiding adverse effects*. Terms such as mitigating, remedying, restoring, compensating for, would be more appropriate.

*Action Sought:*

*Add to, and amend criteria for indigenous biodiversity, when considering resource consents etc.*

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The explanation states that the policy shall cease to have effect once policies 22 and 23 are in place in an operative district or regional plan. This position does not allow for local authorities that have already undertaken a full review of their indigenous biodiversity and have good provisions in place. A further assessment for a resource consent, notice of requirement, a change or variation, would duplicate work and the associated cost of these processes.

*Action Sought:*

*Develop a more flexible approach for deciding when Policy 22 and 23 has been achieved in a regional or district plan.*

## **Policy 58: Allocation of responsibilities to maintain indigenous biodiversity**

The last part of the explanation, about the primary responsibilities of the Regional Council, needs to include its responsibilities for air, water and the Coastal Marine Area.

*Action sought:*

*Reword the last paragraph to include the Regional Council's responsibilities for Air, Water and the Coastal Marine Area.*

## **Policy 66: Restoration and enhancement of indigenous ecosystems and habitats**

The policy should also recognise the role of GWRC and local authorities in animal and plant pest control. The control of introduced mammals is probably the most important thing that has been done to improve indigenous biodiversity in recent years.

## **10. Iwi resource management**

The Council supports this section.

## **11. Landscape**

Wellington City Council recognises the challenge in drafting landscape provisions for the RPS. Mechanisms to protect landscape values have proved particularly difficult to incorporate into regional and district plans. The question of identifying and protecting important landscapes has been a fraught one over many years and has not gained much momentum. In Wellington City the work that has been undertaken in identifying important ridgelines and hilltops is a start and would form part of any wider landscape assessment that might be undertaken.

The Council has also considered the need for a city-wide landscape assessment in resolutions arising from the hearing of submissions to the District Plan following its introduction in 1994. More recently the hearings committee on Plan Change 33 (Ridgelines and Hilltops and Rural Area) identified the desirability of completing a landscape inventory with a comprehensive land use and catchment mapping of the whole district as a matter of priority.

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The Council supports policies 24 and 25 but is concerned about the need for consistency in various planning documents.

## **Policy 24: Identification of outstanding natural features and landscapes and notable landscapes**

The Council welcomes the changes from the earlier draft. The difference between outstanding natural landscapes and other significant landscapes, renamed notable landscapes, is now well explained.

To avoid confusion or uncertainty in future landscape assessment work it is necessary to have consistency between various planning documents. Since the Council's comments on the last draft the Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement has been released. It unfortunately doesn't employ all the same concerns or terms. Its dominant concern in the landscape area is *to preserve the natural character of the coastal environment*. Policy 32 provides criteria for *outstanding natural features and landscapes*, which are consistent with those in Policy 24 of the draft RPS. However, Policy 34, which appears to be about landscapes that are not outstanding, uses the term *natural areas and features* and requires them to be protected where they are:

- (a) of historic importance
- (b) of special value to tangata whenua
- (c) of special scientific importance; and
- (d) wild or scenic.

These criteria partially overlap with those in the draft RPS. However, the coastal statement is focused only on natural character and doesn't provide guidance on situations where the influence of human activity dominates natural components. The challenge for the GWRC will be to adapt the criteria in Policy 24 to ensure their consistency with the ones in the Coastal Policy Statement.

### Action sought:

*Retain the structure and criteria of Policy 24 as far as possible, particularly the distinction between outstanding natural landscapes and notable landscapes. To modify the criteria only as necessary to ensure consistency with the criteria in Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.*

## **Policy 25: Protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes and maintenance and enhancement of notable landscapes**

The policy directs to *protect* outstanding natural features and landscapes but *maintain and enhance* notable landscapes. This puts greater value on natural landscapes, yet some notable landscapes, where human activity has a greater influence on landscape character, may be valued as highly by the community. An example would be a landscape with dramatic geology or landforms in a pastoral landscape (for example Figure 1). If the area was covered in indigenous forest the geology or landforms would be less visible and less valued.

### Action sought:

*Reconsider the requirements to protect, for outstanding naturally dominated landscapes, rather than maintain and enhance, for more human influenced landscapes. Provide some means to protect 'iconic' human influenced landscapes.*

As with Indigenous Biodiversity the policy provides no guidance on principles for preparing policies, rules and methods to protect landscapes. It is necessary to have some mechanism to develop them, to ensure a consistent approach between the different



Figure 1: Weka Pass, Canterbury

councils in the region. GWRC has indicated it will take the lead role in identifying features and landscapes. It should also be the *lead authority responsible for implementation* when it comes to developing regulatory methods for protecting, maintaining and enhancing features and landscapes.

### Action sought:

*GWRC work with local authorities to develop guidelines for the preparing common policies, rules and methods in regional and district plans.*

The explanation indicates that regional plans controls activities that destroy, damage or disturb any foreshore and seabed, or the beds of any river or lake. Regional plans also control the flow of water and the level of water, in rivers, lakes and wetlands. All may be significant components of a landscape.

## **Policy 47: Managing effects on outstanding natural features and landscapes, or notable landscapes**

The explanation states that the policy shall cease to have effect once policies 24 and 25 are in place in an operative district or regional plan. This position does not allow for district councils that have already undertaken a full review of their landscapes and have good provisions in place. A further assessment for a resource consent, notice of requirement, a change or variation, would duplicate work and the associated cost of these processes.

Action Sought:

*Develop a more flexible approach for deciding when Policy 24 and 25 has been achieved in a regional or district plan.*

## 12. Natural hazards

**Policy 26: Avoiding subdivision and development in high hazard risk areas, and**

**Policy 48: Minimise the effects of natural hazards**

It is unclear whether Policy 26 is focused only on new development. How will this policy (and other objectives & policies in this chapter) affect existing structures requiring any future replacement or upgrade works that may result from levels of service changes? Similarly, landowners of hazard prone land in existing built environments have rights in law (existing use rights) allowing them to carry out additions and alterations to properties within the scope of the current use. These rights include being able to rebuild in the event that a building is destroyed (whether as a result of a hazard prone event or some other event). How will the Policy, as currently drafted, allow the Council to balance the rights and expectations of existing landowners and still achieve the intent of the Policy?

The Council also has concerns that utility infrastructure has not been taken into account here. It would be useful for the policy to either exclude utility infrastructure or at least take it into account.

The policy (and at the very least the explanation to Policy 26) needs to recognise the differences in approach that will be required for managing high hazard prone areas where land uses are already well established (e.g. the suburb of Thorndon in relation to the Wellington Fault) and other green-field areas where little or no development currently exists.

In Policies 26 and 48 the term “high” refers to events that will likely happen within the next 100 years.

The RMA requires local authorities to control potential development effects including mitigation of natural hazards. This requires the local authority to have records of natural hazards i.e. floodplain management plans. The Building Act also required buildings to be protected up to a 50 year Average Recurrence Interval (ARI) event.

The Council has, for the last 10 years, prepared Flood Hazard Maps as part of their Catchment Management Planning process. To date 10 flood hazard assessments have been produced (totalling 7,419ha). These maps are based on 50 year storm event and include a freeboard of 300mm added to peak water levels. Each flood risk area has an associated level for the minimum floor level that includes this freeboard.

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Hazard Maps deter the construction of new buildings in flood prone areas. The hazard map information is being continually improved.

Action sought:

*Clarify the scope of policy 26. For example is it dealing with new development in existing developed areas or new development in areas that are currently not developed.*

*It is likely that the phrase 'avoid' is incompatible with the landowner rights in existing areas. 'Mitigation' may be a more appropriate word for these situations.*

*GWRC's role needs to be clarified with regards to the investigation, data collection, research and option selection (method 49) to identify the 100 year flood levels that affect this region.*

*Either exclude or take into account utility infrastructure when referring to new development in existing areas.*

## **Policy 26(2): Avoiding subdivision and development in high hazard risk areas**

The Council acknowledges its responsibility to deal with development issues with regard to natural hazards as required by the RMA and notes the current provisions relating to flood hazard areas, fault rupture zones and proposed new earthworks provision that will address in part development on landslip prone slopes.

However the Council is concerned about the possible implications of item (c) relating to erosion and inundation prone shorelines.

While item (c) focuses on shorelines it does not appear that the requirement for policies and rules in the District Plan to avoid subdivision and development in high hazard risk areas is limited to immediate shoreline areas. In this regard the identification of the coastal environment (Policy 5) refers to land adjacent to the coast that could be affected by coastal inundation. It is unclear therefore if the required policies and rules will have to apply to areas potentially subject to inundation away from the shoreline.

This concern is heightened by the fact that the draft RPS does not exclude tsunami from the cause of inundation.

In the recently released Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement it is noted that tsunami have been excluded from consideration. The following is recorded in the section 32 report for the NZCPS:

“While it is acknowledged that NZ has the potential to be adversely affected by tsunami, this is not a coastal hazard that can readily be identified and managed cost effectively. It is also considered to be a lower priority than the need to manage development from other coastal hazards. It is therefore considered appropriate at this stage to exempt areas at risk from tsunami from requiring identification and assessment.”

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As substantial urban areas of Wellington City are potentially affected by inundation from tsunami the Council requests that Policy 26 be clear as to the extent of its application.

Action sought:

*That Policy 26 be clarified as to whether the affect of tsunami is a matter that is to apply in respect of coastal inundation.*

## 13. Regional form

GWRC should be congratulated on the overall content and approach of the Regional Form section. Subject to specific comments below, the provisions are a considerable improvement to the existing RPS and set a good benchmark for regional policy development in New Zealand. In summary, the Council strongly supports the general approach and content of the provisions on Regional Form and believe it is imperative that these policies remain in the RPS.

The introduction section and issues discussion provides a concise summary of the urban form issues facing the region. In particular, the Council supports the new provisions on integrating transport and land use planning which have been added in response to Council's previous submission.

### **Objective 27: Compact, well designed and sustainable regional form**

This objective is strongly supported.

### **Policies 27-31 and 51-55**

Wellington City Council strongly supports the policies relating to urban form in sections 3.1 and 3.2:

- 27 – structure planning for major developments (with the addition discussed below)
- 28 – maintain the viability and vibrancy of the regional CBD and regional centres
- 29 – identification and promotion of higher density and mixed use development in and around key local centres and public transport links
- 30 – identification and protection of key industrial based employment locations
- 31 – Regional land transport to support a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form
- 51 – Regional urban design principles for urban development
- 52 – Development to support a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form
- 53 – Development that integrates land use with transportation
- 54 – Sequencing of land use and coordination with funding

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- 55 – Management of Regional Focus Areas (with the addition discussed below)

## **Policy 55: Management of Regional Focus Areas**

The Council is also of the view that diagrams of the Regional Focus Areas of the WRS would provide further clarity of the scope of policy 55.

### Action sought:

*Add diagrams of the focus areas to Policy 55*

## **Policy 27: Structure planning for major developments**

The region is growing so there is development pressure on a number of areas. In the past, development has been synonymous with habitat clearance and the piping of streams and wetlands, and in some places clearance is still a threat to biodiversity. Fragmentation is another associated issue. Fragmentation occurs when the edges of ecosystems are “nibbled away” or what was a continuous tract of vegetation is broken up, and the resilience and viability of the ecosystem is diminished. Maintaining ecosystem biodiversity is an important part of ensuring a healthy region, and must be managed alongside development. Low impact subdivision design is one tool available to help preserve natural ecosystems.

### Action sought:

*Add an extra bullet point to the explanation to read:*

*Protection of indigenous ecosystems, habitats and areas with significant indigenous biodiversity values (both terrestrial and aquatic)”*

## **Policy 69: Maintain and enhance a compact, well designed and sustainable regional form**

The Council supports in part Policy 69. In particular we strongly support:

- (a) implementing the NZ Urban Design Protocol
- (c) recognising and enhancing the role of the region’s open space network
- (d) encouraging a range of housing types and developments (including affordable housing) to meet the community’s social and economic needs.

While the Council supports clause (b) *promoting best practice guidance on the location and design of rural residential development*, the Council is of the view that the non-regulatory approach on its own will not lead to sustainable outcomes.

The importance of this issue is recognised in section 2.10 - *Issue 2 - sporadic and uncoordinated development*, and again through Objective 27 (f) – *strategically planned rural residential development*. The policy response, however, doesn’t reflect this level of importance. This is of particular concern to the Council as sporadic and uncoordinated rural residential subdivision is one of the issues that threaten to break down the Region’s existing compact urban

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form and led to the loss of productive agricultural soils. It would be a shame to achieve sustainability gains in the urban areas while being let down in the rural areas.

*Action sought:*

*A new policy to be introduced in either section 3.1 or section 3.2, providing policy guidance on sustainable rural and lifestyle subdivision. (The Council would be willing work with GWRC and other local authorities to develop this guidance.)*

**Methods**

The Council strongly supports the methods relating to urban form in section 3.5.

## 14. Soils and minerals

The soils and minerals section is well thought out and written. The Wellington City District Plan already has comprehensive objectives, policies and rules to manage the use of contaminated land.

The Council supports this section subject to the following comments:

**Policy 32: Management of contaminated land**

The policy requires district plans to include policies and rules that *do not allow activities* on contaminated land if the if the activity could be adversely affected by the contamination. It reads as though the only way to protect people from contamination is to prevent them from using a site for particular activities.

In addition to not allowing people to use land, they can be protected by remedying the contamination of the site or mitigating the effects of the contamination. Wellington City has remedied the contamination of its old depot site in its development as Waitangi Park. The contamination on the old gasworks site in Miramar was mitigated by capping it with clean material, allowing it to be developed for housing.

*Action sought:*

*Provide for policies and rules in district plans that allow for differing approaches of avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of contamination.*