

SECTION 32 REPORT

Overview
 May 2022

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2 Executive Summary

The Far North District Council (**Council**) is required by the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**) to have a district plan in place for the Far North District, and to review the district plan at least every ten years. The current Far North District Plan (**ODP**) was made operative on 14 September 2009. Since that time, it has been subject to 19 plan changes (both Council initiated and private) and a range of minor changes, including changes in response to national direction.

Council initiated a comprehensive review of the Operative Plan in 2015. This has involved engagement with the district's community, tangata whenua and stakeholders to identify the key issues that needed to be addressed by the district plan to help set the platform for the future growth and development of the District. Engagement, input and drafting of a new plan has continued to occur and Council authorisation is now sought for notification of PDP.

The PDP will guide the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the District to provide for the well-being of current and future generations. It is a forward-looking document that manages use and development of the natural and physical resources, while protecting the interests and opportunities of current and future generations to utilise those resources in a sustainable way. The PDP sets out a range of objectives, policies, rules and methods that provides a framework under which the subdivision, use and development of land can occur.

The PDP has been designed to align with a range of national and regional directions that have direct implications for far north communities. This includes the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (**NZCPS**) and the RPS for Northland. The PDP has been prepared in accordance with new national planning standards, changing the structure of the plan and incorporating mandatory content.

The Plan must also play a role in representing a new strategic direction for the district. The plan's ten-year lifespan must bring together strands from Council's long term strategic direction that will be represented in FN2100 whilst demonstrating how we can meet our statutory requirements to ensure that the supply of zoned land and infrastructure meets the district's expected demands for housing and business land.

There is a body of technical analysis and evaluation against regulatory requirements contained in a suite of evaluation reports to support the PDP (Section 32 Reports). These reports are designed to be read with the PDP as planning assessment and technical evidence supporting the provisions in the Proposed District Plan. These 32 reports represent an evaluation of appropriateness of proposed plan objectives and methods to achieve those objectives. There are 36 section 32 reports covering each section of the District Plan and these are provided in accordance with Council's regulatory responsibilities to support the plan making process under Schedule 1 of the RMA.

This overview report provides the statutory context, direction and key issues, documents the engagement that has been undertaken and provides an overview to the Proposed Plan, the evaluation approach and how the plan is configured and designed to achieve the sustainable management purpose of the RMA.

3 Introduction and Purpose

3.1 Far North District Plan

The Far North District Council (**Council**) is required by the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**) to have a district plan in place for the Far North District (**District**) and to review the district plan at least every ten years. The Far North Operative District Plan (**ODP**) was made operative on 14 September 2009. Since that time, it has been subject to some 19 plan changes (both Council initiated and private) and a range of minor changes, including in response to national direction.

As is outlined in more detail below, Council initiated a comprehensive review of the OPD in 2015. This has involved engagement with the district's community, tangata whenua and stakeholders to identify the key issues that needed to be addressed by the district plan to help set the platform for the future growth and development of the District. Engagement, input and drafting of a new plan has continued to occur and Council has now notified the Proposed Far North District Plan (**PDP**).

The PDP guides the sustainable management of natural and physical resources in the District to provide for the well-being of current and future generations. It is a forward-looking document that manages use and development of the natural and physical resources, while protecting the interests and opportunities of current and future generations to utilise those resources in a sustainable way. The Proposed Plan sets out a range of objectives, policies, rules and methods that provides a framework under which the subdivision, use and development of land can occur.

3.2 Section 32 of the Act

Section 32 of the Act requires an evaluation report to be prepared to support the PDP. This evaluation documents the process by which plan provisions are developed and ensures that this process follows a systematic approach to identifying issues, establishing objectives to address identified issues, and developing policies and implementing methods (including rules) to achieve the objectives to collectively achieve the purpose of the RMA in the most effective and efficient way.

The evaluation assists to demonstrate that:

- The objectives, policies and methods (including rules) in the Proposed Plan have been well considered and tested against the purpose of the RMA;
- The provisions in the Proposed Plan are an effective and efficient way to achieve the purpose of the RMA and plan objectives; and
- The anticipated benefits of introducing new regulation outweigh the anticipated costs and risks.

The evaluations aim to communicate the thinking behind the provisions to the community and decision-makers. They tell the 'story' of what is proposed and the reasoning behind it. The evaluation also provides a record for future reference of the process, including the methods, technical studies, and consultation that underpin the plan change / policy process, including the assumptions and risks.

The specific requirements of section 32 are discussed in more detail below, including the role of this overview section 32 report and the section 32 reports prepared for each plan topic.

3.3 The approach to the section 32 evaluation

All district plans cover a range of issues and content – from 'big picture' strategic issues through to detailed provisions and rules. Changes to district plans need to be evaluated under section 32 of the RMA and the level of detail in the evaluation needs to correspond to the scale and significance of the issue and change to the current approach and other matters, such as the risk of acting through the provision.

Much of the strategic context for this district plan review is common across the district and the range of matters addressed in detail in the Proposed Plan. Accordingly, Council has undertaken its section 32 evaluation on two levels to help make these evaluations more accessible and minimise repetition of common content:

- This overview section 32 evaluation report.
- Topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports.

3.3.1 Overview section 32 evaluation report

This report provides an overview to the section 32 evaluation reporting with the intent of reducing the replication of background information, statutory and strategic context in each section 32 report. The report sets out:

- The relevant requirements of the RMA;
- The higher order policy context for the District Plan Review, including relevant national directions and the Northland Regional Policy Statement 2016 (**RPS**) and other Strategic Directions and key resource management issues;
- The process of consultation with the community, tangata whenua and stakeholders;
- A brief review of the existing plan provisions and the reasons for undertaken the plan review;
- An overview of the general approach/structure of the Proposed Plan and the strategic objectives; and
- The approach to evaluation of the Proposed Plan under section 32 of the RMA.

3.3.2 Topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports

Council has prepared some 37 topic specific evaluation reports. These are focussed on the relevant subject/topic and provide a discussion and evaluation of the relevant objectives, policies, rules and methods that corresponds to the scale and significance of each topic in accordance with the requirements of section 32 of the RMA. These topic-specific reports include an assessment of the:

- Significance of the topic and degree of change from the Operative Plan provisions;
- Appropriateness of the objectives in achieving the purpose of the RMA;
- Appropriateness of the provisions in achieving the desired objectives, including consideration of other options and consideration of the costs and benefits; and
- The risks of acting or not acting, where relevant.

The topic-specific section 32 evaluations are provided in the table.

Section 32 Report	Relevant PDP Chapters
Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General residential zone • Mixed use zone • Light industrial zone • Heavy industrial zone
Rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural production zone • Rural lifestyle zone • Rural residential zone • Horticulture Zone
Open Space and Recreation Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural open space zone • Open Space Zone • Sport and active recreation zone
Tangata whenua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangata whenua chapter • Sites and areas of Significance to Māori

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treaty Settlement Overlay • Māori Purpose Zone
Settlement Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement Zone
Airport Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport Zone
Carrington Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrington Estate Zone
Horticulture Processing Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horticulture Processing Facilities Zone
Hospital Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital Zone
Kauri Cliffs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kauri Cliffs
Kororāreka Russell Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kororāreka Russell Township Zone
Motorua Island Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorua Island Zone
Ngawha Innovation and Enterprise Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ngawha Innovation and Enterprise Park
Orongo Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quail Ridge
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure
Renewable Electricity Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable Electricity Generation
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Chapter
Natural hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Hazards
Hazardous substances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous substances
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage area overlays • Historic Heritage
Notable Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable Trees
Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural character chapter
Natural features and landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural features and landscapes chapter
Public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access chapter
Subdivision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subdivision chapter
Activities on the Surface of Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities on the Surface of Water
Coastal Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal environment chapter
Earthworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earthworks chapter
Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light chapter

Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise chapter
Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs chapter
Genetically modified organisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetically modified organisms
Temporary activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary activities
Mineral Extraction Overlay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mineral Extraction Overlay

4 Statutory and Policy Context

4.1 Resource Management Act

4.1.1 Part 2 – Purpose and Principles

Part 2 of the Act comprises sections 5 to 8 and outlines its purpose and other matters of significance that Council must address in exercising its functions and powers in managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources.

Section 5

The purpose of the Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. Sustainable management is defined under section 5(2) of the RMA as:

“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 well-being and for their health and safety while [emphasis added] –

- (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.”*

Section 6

Section 6 requires that the Council *recognise and provide for* matters of national importance. These are:

- (a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development;
- (b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development;
- (c) The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna;
- (d) The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers;
- (e) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga;
- (f) The protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development;
- (g) The protection of protected customary rights;

- (h) The management of significant risks from natural hazards.

Section 7

Section 7 requires the Council to have particular regard to the following other matters:

- (a) Kaitiakitanga;
- (aa) The ethic of stewardship;
- (b) The efficient use and development of natural and physical resources;
- (ba) The efficiency of the end use of energy;
- (c) The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values;
- (d) Intrinsic values of ecosystems;
- (f) Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment;
- (g) Any finite characteristics of natural and physical resources;
- (h) The protection of the habitat of trout and salmon;
- (i) The effects of climate change;

the benefits to be derived from the use and development of renewable energy.

Section 8

Section 8 of the Act requires the Council to take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

4.1.2 Section 31 – District Council Functions

The matters addressed in district plans are determined by the key functions of territorial authorities as outlined in section 31 of the Act. The key functions of FNDC are identified in Section 31(1)¹ as being:

- (a) *The establishment, implementation, and review of objectives, policies, and methods to achieve integrated management of the effects of the use, development, or protection of land and associated natural and physical resources of the district;*
- (aa) *The establishment, implementation, and review of objectives, policies, and methods to ensure that there is sufficient development capacity in respect of housing and business land to meet the expected demands of the district;*
- (b) *The control of any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protection of land, including for the purpose of—*
 - (i) *The avoidance or mitigation of natural hazards;*
 - (iia) *The prevention or mitigation of any adverse effects of the development, subdivision, or use of contaminated land;*
 - (iii) *The maintenance of indigenous biological diversity;*
- (d) *The control of the emission of noise and the mitigation of the effects of noise;*
- (e) *The control of any actual or potential effects of activities in relation to the surface of water in rivers and lakes; and*
- (f) *Any other functions specified in this Act.*

Those functions relating to the provision of sufficient development capacity, contaminated land and maintenance of indigenous biological diversity have been added since the Operative Plan was developed.

It is noted that a district plan is the key means for a territorial authority to undertake its functions under s31 of the Act but there are a number of other means to implement these functions (e.g. consenting, monitoring and compliance). Councils' obligation to ensure there is sufficient

¹ Note the numbering of clauses in the RMA is not sequential as some clauses have been repealed and others added.

development capacity in respect of housing and business land to meet the expected demands of the district is further detailed in sections 4 and 5 of this report.

4.1.3 District Plans

Sections 72 – 77 set out the purpose and processes associated with district plans. District plans are prepared to assist the Council to fulfil its statutory functions under the RMA (Section 72).

Every territorial authorities must have a district plan that is prepared under the requirements of Schedule 1 (Section 73). The 1st schedule outlines the statutory requirements for preparing a proposed district plan, including consultation and process matters both prior to and following public notification.

Section 74 states that Council must prepare (and change) its district plan in accordance with:

- *Its functions under section 31;*
- *The provisions of Part 2 (see above);*
- *A direction given by the Minister for the Environment (under section 25A(2));*
- *Its obligation (if any) to prepare an evaluation report in accordance with section 32; and*
- *Its obligation to have particular regard to an evaluation report prepared in accordance with section 32; and*
- *A national policy statement, a New Zealand coastal policy statement, and a national planning standard; and*
- *Any regulations.*

In addition, to the extent that their content has a bearing on resource management issues of the district, Council must:

- have regard to:
 - *A proposed regional policy statement or proposed regional plan of its region in regard to any matter of regional significance or for which the regional council has primary responsibility;*
 - *Management plans and strategies prepared under other acts;*
 - *A relevant entry on the New Zealand heritage list/rārangi kōrero required by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014;*
 - *Regulations relating to ensuring sustainability, or the conservation, management, or sustainability of fisheries resources (including regulations or bylaws relating to taiapure, mahinga mataitai, or other non-commercial maori customary fishing); and*
 - *Relevant project area and project objectives (as those terms are defined in section 9 of the urban development act 2020), if section 98 of that act applies*
- *Take into account any relevant planning document recognised by an iwi authority and lodged with the territorial authority.*

Section 75 details the contents of district plans including mandatory (objectives, policies and rules) and discretionary content. This section specifies that a district plan **must give effect to:**

- (a) *Any national policy statement;*
- (b) *Any New Zealand coastal policy statement;*
- (ba) *A national planning standard; and*
- (c) *Any regional policy statement*

and must **not be inconsistent with** –

- (b) *A regional plan for any matter specified in section 30(1).*

Furthermore, section 58I requires the structure and framework of a district plan to be in accordance with the National Planning Standards (**Planning Standards**).

Under section 79, the Council must commence a review of a provision of a district plan within 10 years of it being made operative, if the provision has not been subject to a review or change during the previous 10 years.

4.2 National Direction

Section 75(3)(a) of the RMA requires that a district plan give effect to any National Policy Statement (NPS). A NPS is a document prepared under the RMA and enable central government to prescribe objectives and policies for matters of national significance which are relevant to achieving the purpose of the RMA. Five NPS have been gazetted to date, with another two proposed but not yet gazetted.

4.2.1 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010

The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) is the only mandatory NPS under the RMA and the current NZCPS took effect on 3 December 2010.

The NZCPS directs local authorities on the management of the coastal environment. It contains policies that when implemented enable the achievement of the purpose of the RMA in relation to the coastal environment. The NZCPS recognises the important natural processes and development pressures around the coast and promotes a strategic and integrated approach to coastal planning and management. The Proposed Plan is responsible for managing effects from the use, development, or protection of land on the landward side of the coastal marine area.

The NZCPS identifies seven objectives as national priorities, these are:

- To safeguard the integrity, form, functioning and resilience of the coastal environment and sustain its ecosystems.
- To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and protect natural features and landscape values.
- To take account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, recognise the role of tangata whenua as kaitiaki and provide for tangata whenua involvement in management of the coastal environment.
- To maintain and enhance the public open space qualities and recreation opportunities of the coastal environment.
- To ensure that coastal hazard risks taking account of climate change are managed through a range of activities.
- To enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and their health and safety, through subdivision, use, and development.
- To ensure that management of the coastal environment recognises and provides for New Zealand's international obligations regarding the coastal environment, including the coastal marine area.

The 'Coastal Environment' is not defined in the RMA, nor the NZCPS itself. Instead, Policy 1 of the NZCPS recognises that the extent and characteristics of the coastal environment vary from locality to locality. Characteristics that may apply to the landward component of the coastal environment include:

- Areas where coastal processes, influences or qualities are significant;
- Areas at risk from coastal hazards;
- Coastal vegetation and the habitat of indigenous coastal species including migratory birds;
- Elements and features that contribute to the natural character, landscape, visual qualities or amenity values;
- Items of cultural and historic heritage in the coastal marine area or on the coast;
- Inter-related coastal marine and terrestrial systems; and

- Physical resources and built facilities, including infrastructure such as roads, that have modified the coastal environment.

The coastal environment in the District is influenced by many of the factors listed above. The Proposed Plan has identified a coastal environment that is identified on planning maps. It also includes maps of areas of high and outstanding natural character which are based on the mapping of the coastal environment in the Northland RPS. The Proposed Plan's coastal environment section includes provisions relating to the management of land use and subdivision and are discussed in the Coastal Environment section 32 report. Provisions relating to natural hazards in the coastal environment, including those associated with coastal processes such as erosion, sea level rise and inundation, are addressed in the Natural Hazards section 32 report.

4.2.2 National Policy Statement for Electricity Transmission 2008

The national grid plays a vital role in the well-being of people and the environment. The National Policy Statement for Electricity Transmission 2008 (**NPS-ET**) acknowledges the importance of the national grid while managing the potential effects associated with this large-scale infrastructure. It achieves this by setting out the direction for the management of the effects of the electricity transmission network and the effects of activities on the efficient and effective operation of the electricity transmission network.

This is carried out by required objectives, policies, and methods (including rules) to recognise transmission corridors, to identify transmission lines on planning maps, and to provide controls on subdivision and land use as necessary to ensure that the operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of transmission infrastructure is not compromised as a result of incompatible land uses.

The National Grid currently extends north from the Whangarei district to Kaikohe and the Proposed Plan includes provisions to manage the effects of activities on this network to give effect to the NPS-ET. The NPS-ET, and how it is given effect to, is assessed further in the Infrastructure section 32 report.

4.2.3 National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011

The National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 (**NPS-REG**) sets out the objectives and policies for renewable electricity generation which seeks to provide a consistent approach to planning for renewable electricity generation across New Zealand. This NPS-REG applies to generation activities at any scale, and covers the construction, operation and maintenance of structure associated with renewable electricity generation activities.

The Proposed Plan gives effect to the NPS-REG as the objectives and policies seek to recognise and provide for the significant local, regional and national benefits of renewable electricity generation activities, while managing potential adverse effects. The NPS-REG, and how it is given effect to, is assessed further in the Renewable Electricity Generation section 32 report.

4.2.4 National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2020

The National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2020 (**NPS-FM**) was first introduced in 2011, updated and replaced in 2014 and further amended in 2017. The current version came into effect on 3 September 2020 and was a substantial revision of the previous versions.

The NPS-FM sets out an objective and policies that focus on:

- Managing freshwater in a way that 'gives effect' to Te Mana o te Wai: (the integrated and holistic well-being of a freshwater body) in the management of fresh water;
- Prioritising the health and wellbeing of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems, followed by the health needs of people, followed by the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being, now and in the future;

- Avoiding overallocation, improving and maximising efficient allocation and use of water and safeguarding its life-supporting capacity;
- Improving integrated management of fresh water and the use and development of land;
- Establishing a national objectives framework, monitoring progress, and accounting for freshwater takes and contaminants; and
- Providing for the active involvement of tangata whenua in freshwater management and that Māori freshwater values are identified and provided for.

While many of the objectives and policies relate to the functions of regional councils, those covering integrated management, and tangata whenua roles and interests are of relevance to the Council.

Provisions relating to the management of the use and development of land to safeguard water will also be relevant to the Proposed Plan, but will be implemented in close coordination with Northland Regional Council in order to avoid overlap and duplication.

4.2.5 National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020

The National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (**NPS-UD**) was introduced in July 2020 and took effect on 20 August 2020, replacing the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity 2016.

The NPS-UD seeks:

- Well-functioning urban environments that enable all people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future;
- Sufficient development capacity to meet demand for housing and for business land over the short term, medium term, and long term.

Under the NPS-UD, well functioning urban environments are ones that:

- (a) Have or enable a variety of homes that:
 - (i) Meet the needs, in terms of type, price, and location, of different households; and
 - (ii) Enable Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms; and
- (b) Have or enable a variety of sites that are suitable for different business sectors in terms of location and site size;
- (c) Have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport; and
- (d) Support, and limit as much as possible adverse impacts on, the competitive operation of land and development markets;
- (e) Support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and
- (g) Are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.

FNDC does not meet the NPS UD definition of a tier 3 urban environment, requiring a population of at least 10,000 within an urban character area. Council can however recognise the methods in the NPS UD as a best practice guide as to how to programme integrated management responses to achieving well-functioning urban environments,

A spatial plan for Kerikeri Waipapa is being developed in accordance with the “Future Development Strategy” provisions of the NPS UD and this should set a template for integrated management approach for land use, financial and infrastructure planning. This strategic approach will also assist Council in determining how and when Kerikeri and Waipapa may assume a tier 3 status, and how we then service urban growth under the NPS UD directions and trigger associated processes, including removal of parking provisions.

4.2.6 Proposed National Policy Statements

Unlike a proposed Regional Policy Statement, there is no mandatory requirement under the RMA for a district plan to have regard to a proposed or draft National Policy Statement. However, while draft national policy documents do not have any legal weight, they can provide an indication of the Government's priorities and therefore have been considered in the drafting of the Proposed Plan. There are two draft NPS that have significant relevance to the District (should they be gazetted) and have been considered in the development of the Proposed Plan.

Proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity, 2019

The proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity, 2019 (**proposed NPSIB**) sets out objectives, policies and implementation requirements to manage natural and physical resources to maintain indigenous biological diversity (indigenous biodiversity) under the Act. Public consultation on the proposed NPSIB took place between November 2019 and January 2020. Officials are continuing to work on issues raised through public consultation and the intention is to release an exposure draft of the NPSIB in the first half of 2022². The exposure draft responds to feedback from submissions and hui and will help test the workability of updated provisions, but the general intent and scope of the NPSIB remains broadly consistent with that consulted on.

This proposed NPSIB has been promoted in response to central governments concern that biodiversity has declined through our use of land and other natural resources and through the introduction (deliberate or otherwise) of exotic species that have become pests outside their natural environments. Many indigenous species and ecosystems have been lost and many that remain are now highly threatened or at risk of extinction.

A key part of the proposed NPSIB is the requirements to map Significant Natural Areas (**SNA**) and the draft NPSIB sets out detailed principles and ecological criteria with the intention of map SNAs in a nationally consistent, robust manner. However, it is not clear what the proposed NPSIB SNA mapping requirements will be when it comes into force and how these requirements may change following policy consultation.

The proposed NPS-IB has been used as guidance when preparing the proposed provisions for the Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity chapter in the Proposed Plan. This NPS-IB is discussed in greater detail in the Ecosystems and Indigenous Biodiversity section 32 report.

Proposed National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land

Central government is intending to gazette a National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land (NPS-HPL), following the release of a discussion document in 2019.

The overall purpose of the NPS-HPL is to improve the way highly-productive land is managed under the RMA to:

- Recognise the full range of values and benefits associated with its use for primary production
- Maintain its availability for primary production for future generations
- Protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development.

The proposed NPS-HPL is highly relevant to the Rural Zone chapters in the Proposed Plan. The proposed NPS-HPL provides strong direction to protect highly productive land from rural lifestyle development and other inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Highly productive land is defined in the proposed NPS-HPL as land classified as Land Use Capability (**LUC**) classes 1-3 (as the default highly productive land that requires protection) and other classes of land "*that are, or have the potential to be, highly productive*" (e.g. areas suitable for generic horticulture or viticulture).

²<https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/national-policy-statements/proposed-nps-indigenous-biodiversity/>

Mapping of highly productive land is to be undertaken by regional councils in collaboration with territorial authorities with interim protection of LUC 1-3 land until the regional mapping is complete.

The proposed NPS-HPL will require territorial authorities to develop district plan provision that protect highly productive land from rural lifestyle subdivision, urban expansion and 'inappropriate' activities (non-productive activities on highly productive land) while also managing reverse sensitivity effects and supporting productive uses.

Final decisions on the proposed NPS-HPL will be Cabinet in the first half of 2022. If approved by Cabinet, the proposal would likely take effect in the first half of 2022³.

This potential NPS has been considered in the Rural Zone section 32 report.

4.3 National Environmental Standards (NES)

Section 44 of the RMA requires local authorities to recognise National Environmental Standards (NES). There are currently nine NES in place that prescribe standards that Councils must enforce. The potential relevance of these NES are summarised below:

- The National Environmental Standard for Air Quality, 2004 is a regulation that aims to set a guaranteed minimum level of health protection for all New Zealanders. Regional Councils are required to manage air quality and the requirements under this NES through their regional plans.
- The NES for Sources of Drinking Water, 2007 (**NES-DW**) protects human drinking water from becoming contaminated. The standard applies to source water before it is treated and only water that is used to supply human drinking water. These relate to lakes, rivers and groundwater. Regional Councils are required to manage contaminants that may enter drinking water sources through discharge permits.
- The NES Electricity Transmission Activities, 2009 (**NES-ET**) sets out to minimise the cost to councils of implementing the NPS-ET and ensure planning requirements are nationally consistent for maintenance and upgrading of transmission lines. The NES-ET only applies to existing high voltage transmission lines and does not apply to new lines or substations. The Proposed Plan is consistent with the provisions and requirements set out in the NES-ET through the Infrastructure chapter.
- The NES for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health, 2011 (**NES-CS**) is a nationally consistent set of planning controls and soil contaminant values. It ensures that land affected by contaminants in soil is appropriately identified and assessed before it is developed and if necessary, the land is remediated or the contaminants contained to make the land safe for human use. All territorial authorities are required to observe and enforce the NES-CS. The Council has been administering and enforcing the NES-CS since its enactment in 2012 and the Proposed Plan is consistent with its requirements.
- The NES for Telecommunication Facilities, 2016 (**NES-TF**) allows network operators to install some low impact telecommunication infrastructure in road reserves without the need to apply for resource consent, provided they met specified conditions. The NES-TF provides a set of rules for permitted telecommunication facilities. The Proposed Plan recognises these standards and seeks to ensure that no conflicts exist through the Infrastructure chapter.
- The NES for Plantation Forestry, 2017 (**NES-PF**) seeks to maintain and improve the environmental outcomes of plantation forestry nationally and to increase certainty and efficiency in the management of plantation forestry activities. The NES-PF provides consistent

³<https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/national-policy-statements/proposed-nps-highly-productive-land/>

rules across the country for specified forestry related activities. The Proposed Plan is considered consistent with this NES.

- The NES for Freshwater, 2020 (**NES-F**) regulates activities that pose a risk to the health of freshwater and freshwater ecosystems. The NES-F includes standards relating to farming activities and activities that relate to freshwater – in particular wetlands and fish passage. While the NES-F relates primarily to the functions of regional councils, the NES-F has been considered through the development of the Proposed Plan.
- The NES for Marine Aquaculture, 2020 (**NES-MA**). This NES is not relevant to the district plan review.
- The NES for Storing Tyres Outdoors, 2021 (**NES-STO**) provides nationally consistent rules for the responsible storage of tyres. This is not an activity that was controlled by the Operative Plan and is regulated by regional councils so is not relevant for the Proposed Plan.

4.4 National Planning Standards

The Planning Standards were initially published in April 2019 but were subject to minor changes with an updated version being released in November 2019. Their purpose is to provide national consistency for the structure, form, definitions and electronic accessibility of Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) plans and policy statements to make them more efficient and easier to prepare and use.

The Planning Standards provide mandatory direction by requiring consistent structure, definitions, format and electronic functionality and accessibility. The standards outline the spatial layers that can be used in a District Plan, including zones, overlays, precincts, special controls, development areas and designations. Councils are required to implement the Planning Standards under section 58I for any proposed plan.

Accordingly, the Proposed Plan has been developed to be consistent with the requirements of the Planning Standards as follows:

4.4.1 Plan Structure

The general structure of the Proposed Plan is as follows:

Part 1: Introduction and General Provisions: This is where general guidance information should be included. It includes specific chapters on How the Plan Works, Interpretation, National Direction Instruments and Tangata Whenua.

Part 2: District Wide Matters: This is where matters that are district wide should be included. The matters are categorised together as follows:

- Strategic Direction: This is where the strategic objectives on key strategic matters are included. An urban form and development chapter is mandatory.
- Energy, infrastructure and transport: Matters relating to infrastructure, renewable energy and energy efficiency and transport are located in this section.
- Hazards and Risks: Matters relating to natural hazards (except coastal hazards) and hazardous substances are located in this section.
- Historical and cultural values: Matters relating to historic heritage, notable trees, sites and areas of significance to Māori must be included in this chapter.
- Natural environment values: Matters relating to ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity, natural character, natural features and landscapes, and public access must be included in this chapter.
- Subdivision: This is a standalone chapter that must include those matters relating to subdivision.

- General District wide matters: This section relates to the general district wide matters of activities on the surface of water, coastal environment, earthworks, light, noise, signs, genetically modified organisms and temporary activities treaty settlement land overlay and mineral extraction overlay.

Part 3: Area Specific Matters: The area specific matters are addressed by:

Zones

A zone spatially identifies and manages an area with common environmental characteristics or where environmental outcomes are sought, by bundling compatible activities or effects together, and controlling those that are incompatible. The planning standards sets the range and types of land-use zones that can be used in district plans. Councils must select the relevant zones for their district from this set.

However, there are instances where a planning response needs its own special purpose zone. These include local, site-specific exceptional uses that cannot be managed through any of the framework zones or spatial planning tools. New special purpose zones can only be created under criteria listed in the planning standards.

The zones used in the Proposed Plan are as follows:

- Residential Zone:
 - General Residential;
- Rural Zones
 - Rural Production
 - Rural Settlement
 - Rural Lifestyle
- Commercial and mixed use zones
 - Mixed Use
- Industrial Zones
 - Light Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
- Open Space Zones
 - Natural open space
 - Open Space
 - Sport and Active Recreation

Special Purpose Zones

- Rural Residential
- Airport
- Horticulture
- Moturoa Island
- Point Veronica
- Carrington Estate
- Kauri Cliffs
- Orongo Bay
- Quail Ridge
- Māori Purpose

Designations

Spatially identifies where a designation is included in a District Plan under section 168 or section 168A or clause 4 of Schedule 1 of the RMA.

Part 4: Appendices and Schedules

- APP1 – Mapping methods and criteria

- APP2 – Statutory Acknowledgement Areas
- APP2A - Te Roroa Claims Settlement Act 2008
- APP2B - Ngati Kuri Claims Settlement Act 2015/2B
- APP2C - Te Aupouri Claims Settlement Act 2015
- APP2D - NgaiTakoto Claims Settlement Act 2015
- APP2E - Te Rarawa Claims Settlement Act 2015
- APP2F - Ngatikahu ki Whangaroa Claims Settlement Act 2017
- APP3 – Subdivision Management Plan Criteria
- APP 4 - Airport protection surfaces
- APP 5 - Ngawha Innovation and Enterprise Park Design Guidelines and Masterplan

Schedules

- Schedule 1 - Schedule of notable trees
- Schedule 2 - Schedule of historic sites, buildings and objects
- Schedule 3 - Schedule of sites of cultural significance to Māori
- Schedule 4 – Schedule of Significant Natural Areas
- Schedule 5 - Schedule of Outstanding Natural Landscapes
- Schedule 6 - Schedule of Outstanding Natural Features
- Schedule 7 – Schedule of High Natural Character
- Schedule 8 – Schedule of Outstanding Natural Character standing Natural Character

4.4.2 Definitions

The planning standards contain a Definitions List. Councils must use these when these terms are used in the same context as in the definitions.

However, councils can define:

- Terms that are a subcategory of, or have a narrower application than, a defined term in the Definitions List. Any such definitions must be consistent with the higher-level definition in the Definitions List; and
- Additional terms that do not have the same or equivalent meaning as a term defined in the Definitions List.

The PDP follows these directions, using planning standards definitions where possible, and providing additional definitions as required to best enable interpretation by plan users. More context for the additional definitions is provided in the topic-specific section 32 report the definition relates to.

The planning standards direct that where Te Reo Māori terms need to be defined or translated into English, this should be within the Definitions chapter.

4.4.3 ePlan

The PDP is displayed in ePlan format on the Isovist platform, which is accessible from the Council website. It complies with the Planning Standards in terms of content and structure. It has keyword search functionality and hyperlinks to definition, and internal and external reference documents.

4.4.4 Maps

The ePlan has GIS functionality that complies with planning standard requirements including:

- Ability for users to query the ePlan to display the plan provisions that apply to specific properties and one or more specific activities;
- Datasets and supporting information are publicly accessible; and
- Datums and projections comply with NZTM2000 and vertical datums comply with NZVD2016.

The maps follow planning standard symbology where these are provided. Additional GIS viewer symbology has been created for areas such as statutory acknowledgement areas, hazard areas that are not included in the planning standards.

The GIS viewer also includes layers to make it easy to read including road names and cadastral boundaries. Content can be printed, including map extracts, bookmarked content, map sections can be analysed in terms of distance and area. A number of layers are also included that are non statutory and provided for reference.

4.5 Regional Planning Documents

4.5.1 Northland Regional Policy Statement

As previously indicated, a district plan must give effect to the relevant RPS. The second RPS was made operative on 9 May 2016. As required under the RMA, the RPS sets out a range of issues, objectives policies and methods to contribute to the integrated management of the natural and physical resources in the Northland region.

The RPS identified eight high level resource management issues and issues of significance to iwi authorities of Northland, as follows:

- Fresh and coastal water;
- Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity;
- Infrastructure and economic activities;
- Regional form;
- Issues of significance to tangata whenua – participation in resource management;
- Issues of significant to tangata whenua – natural and physical resource;
- Natural hazards; and
- Natural character, features/landscapes and historic heritage.

The issues are translated into 15 objectives, which state the desired goals and outcomes of the RPS⁴.

Many of the issues, and associated objectives and policies, relate to the natural resource management functions of regional council and hence are given effect to by RPS. However, many issues and objectives have a component that is the responsibility of Council to consider and address as appropriate when managing subdivision, development land-use activities through the Proposed Plan. These include:

- Indigenous ecosystems and biodiversity;
- Enabling economic wellbeing;
- Economic activities, including reverse sensitivity;
- Regionally significant infrastructure and efficient and effective infrastructure;
- Security of energy, including renewable energy;
- Regional form and the built environment in general;
- Issues of significance to tangata whenua and the tangata whenua role in decision making;
- Natural hazards; and
- Natural character, outstanding features/landscapes and historic heritage.

Given the wide range of objectives and policies in the RPS, their relevance to a specific topic area and how they have been given effect to in the Proposed Plan are addressed in detail in the topic-specific section 32 evaluations.

⁴ The issues and objectives are provided in full in Appendix 1.

4.5.2 Operative Regional Plans

The Northland Regional Council (NRC) has prepared and administers three Operative Regional Plans. As regional plans are typically focussed on the delivery of regional council functions, they generally have less relevance to a district plan. Accordingly, section 75(4)(b) of the RMA states that any District Plan must not be 'inconsistent with' a regional plan for any matter stated in section 30(1).

Regional Water and Soil Plan (update published May 2016)

The purpose of this Plan is to assist the NRC to promote the sustainable management of the water and soil resources in Northland.

Regional Coastal Plan (May 2016)

A regional coastal plan is required to be in place at all times for a region to promote the sustainable management of the natural and physical resources in relation to the coastal marine area and to assist in giving effect to the NZCPS.

While the Coastal Marine Area (CMA) is that area seaward of mean high water springs, and hence not part of the district, there is a clear interface between the seaward and landward components of the coastal environment.

Air Quality Plan (May 2016)

This plan primarily manages the discharge of contaminants to air from industrial and trade processes and other activities.

4.5.3 Proposed Regional Plan for Northland

In addition to the operative plans, the Northland Regional Council has prepared a new Proposed Regional Plan for Northland. This plan was notified September 2017 and is currently subject to appeals that are progressively being resolved or determined. As such, large parts of the plan are now 'past appeal' and are operative.

The Proposed Regional Plan is a combined regional air, land, water and coastal plan and will, once fully operative, will replace the existing suite of regional plans. The proposed regional plan contains very little optional content such as issues, explanations, methods (other than rules) and assessment criteria.

The Operative and Proposed Regional Plans have been considered through the District Plan Review. More detailed commentary on how the proposed Plan is consistent with the Proposed Regional Plan is provided in topic-specific section 32 reports, as relevant to the nature of the topic.

4.6 Iwi Management Plans

Section 74(2A) of the RMA requires Council to take into account any relevant planning document recognised by an iwi authority and lodged with the territorial authority, to the extent that its content has a bearing on the resource management issues of the district, when preparing and changing district plans.

Council has fourteen hapū/iwi management planning documents that have been formally lodged as follows:

- Ngāti Kuta ki Te Rawhiti Hapu Management Plan, 5th Edition
- Ngāti Rēhia Hapū Environmental Management Plan, 2018
- Te Iwi o Ngātiwai Iwi Environmental Policy Document, 2015
- Haititaimarangi Marae, Hapū Development Plan, 2015
- Ngāti Kuri Pou Taiao Environmental Management Plan, 2018
- Nga tikanga o te taiao o Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Hine Iwi Environmental Management Plan, 2008

- Nga Ture mo Te Taiao o Te Roroa. Te Roroa Iwi Environmental Policy Document 2008 (reviewed 2011)
- Ngāti Rangī Hapū Management Plan, 2016
- Kia matau, kia mohio e ora ana Te U Kai Po Iwi Environmental Management Plan o Nga Iwi o Whaingāroa, April 2011
- Te Kahukura a Ngati Korokoro, Ngati Wharara me Te Pouka. Nga hapū o Te Wahapū o Te Hokianga-nui a Kupe, 2008.
- Ngāi Takoto Environmental Plan
- Ahipara Takiwā Management Plan
- Ngāti Torehina Hapū Environmental Management Plan
- Kororāreka Marae Society Hapū Environmental Management Plan

These planning documents are wide ranging in the matters they cover, high level and strategic and provide a road map for joint consideration and implementation by the hapū and / or iwi and FNDC. Each plan is comprehensive and covers a range of issues of importance to the respective iwi or hapū. The plans contain statements of identity and whakapapa and identify the rohe over which mana whenua are held. The cultural and spiritual values associated with the role of kaitiaki over resources within their rohe are articulated.

In 2014, a series of joint hui were convened by Council, NRC, Whangarei District Council (WDC) and Kaipara District Council (KDC) to discuss tangata whenua issues in district and regional planning. From those hui, and from consideration of hapū / iwi planning documents, the following planning issues of relevance were identified, noting that some are the responsibility of the regional council.

- Engagement / participation provisions need to be improved.
- The use of mātauranga Māori.
- Impacts on the mauri of resources.
- The use of rahui.
- The disposal of waste water to land.
- Public access to wāhi tapu, mahinga kai etc.
- Renewable energy in relation to Māori land development.
- Identification and management of cultural landscapes.
- Impacts on archaeological / historic resources.
- Mining in areas of significance to tangata whenua.
- Genetically modified organism. A precautionary approach is being sought by tangata whenua.
- Monitoring by tangata whenua
- Transfers and joint management need to be considered.
- Appropriate provisions for Treaty Settlement land.
- Notification processes.
- Consistency with Waitangi Tribunal reports.
- The use of Māori commissioners in district planning.
- Provisions for Māori Land development.

In addition to the matters above, the plans also identify the wellbeing of the environment and its inhabitants as being an important consideration. The objectives and policies refer to the amenity values of the environment, landscapes and features as being important and requiring management.

The management plans and the broader outcomes sought have been taken into account in the development of the Proposed Plan. The feedback from recent engagement with tangata whenua on the Proposed Plan is further described in Section 5.3 of this report.

4.7 Other Legislation and Guidance Documents

District council functions and activities are directed and influenced by a wide range of other legislation and regulations. Those that are relevant and have been considered when preparing the Proposed

Plan are provided in Appendix 2. Where appropriate, the Proposed Plan gives effect to this legislation by rules that implement the standards and requirements where relevant. This is discussed, to the extent relevant, within the topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports.

Additionally, other guidance documents prepared by Central Government, the Northland Regional Council and other parties have been relied on for technical information and other matters. To the extent that they are relevant and are material to the topic at hand, these are referred to within the topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports.

4.8 Local Policies, Plans, and Strategies

4.8.1 Far North 2100

Far North 2100 is the district strategy and was adopted in November 2021. It describes how the Far North may look in 80 years time, based on the vision for the district:

“He Whenua Rangatira – a district of sustainable prosperity and wellbeing’.

It takes on board the things that will influence the district’s future from a global, national, and local perspective and considers its place in New Zealand and the challenges that must be overcome.

Key Areas of Focus

FN2100 identifies five key drivers of focus:

Growth - Economic Prosperity

The Far North has a sustainable economy. It is high in productivity and provides the opportunity for all people in the Far North to contribute and succeed. The Far North economy supports a standard of living that enables our people to lead happy, healthy lives.

Stewardship - Environmental Prosperity

The people who make up the communities of the Far North nurture their natural resources and ecosystems. There is a culture of stewardship in the community that promotes biodiversity and environmental sustainability. The social, cultural, and economic activities in the Far North are aligned with our expectations for the environment.

Communities Of Care - Social Prosperity

Far North communities are equal, inclusive, and socially connected. They are free from prejudice. Communities promote inter-generational equity – meeting the needs of the present population, without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations.

Communities Of Care - Cultural prosperity

Far North communities are empowered to express and celebrate their diverse cultural heritages. They also recognise the cultural significance of Māori as tangata whenua of Aotearoa – New Zealand.

Key Areas of Change

FN2100 identifies five key drivers of change:

Putting the wellbeing of communities and people first

The promotion of the four aspects of wellbeing has been re-introduced as a purpose of local government under the Local Government Act. It is now a requirement that we consider social, cultural, economic, and environmental wellbeing as part of Council decision-making.

Promoting resilient economic growth for sustainable prosperity

The Far North has one of the lowest GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita measures in New Zealand. Historically, the Far North economy has been hard-hit by economic downturns. The impact

of events such as drought, floods or pandemics tend to be delayed and long lasting. The Far North economy is dominated by primary sector industries like farming, horticulture, fishing and quarrying. It is less represented by secondary sector industries, which process raw materials from the primary sector into manufactured goods and products.

Active response to Climate Change

Climate change is a global issue and is due, largely, to the increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The entire Far North is predicted to experience temperature increases and more extreme weather events. Coastal communities will be affected by sea level rise. Climate change will impact what can be grown in the District and where people can live.

Connecting People, Businesses, and Places

The Far North District is made up of many small communities, some remote, that rely on an extensive road network to physically connect people and places, businesses, amenities, and services. The geography of our district means these roads require high levels of maintenance. Due to its small ratepayer base, the cost of maintaining the road network is a challenge for Council. Severe weather events dramatically increase the roading bill and leave communities temporarily cut off. These events are expected to increase due the effects of climate change.

Protect the natural environment for future generations.

The Far North has a nationally-unique environment containing many endangered species of plants and animals, as well as significant habitats such as natural wetlands and dune lakes. A sizeable percentage of the Far North is considered a Significant Natural Area, recognised for its natural values and because of the native species present.

While these drivers of change are multi-faceted, the Proposed Plan has an important role to play in helping to enable change by providing for appropriate and sustainable development, managing the effects of climate change and associated natural hazards and striking a balance between protecting significant natural areas while enable land to be utilised for a range of activities.

4.8.2 Community Development Plans

Council, in conjunction with its communities, have developed 17 non-statutory Community Plans. These plans area designed to assist both the Council and the community to manage growth within their centres, whilst protecting those characteristics and features that the community values most.

The Community Plans are driven by values and aspiration, with the plans centred on the environmental, spiritual, social, cultural and economic wellbeing of that community. The community plans are listed below:

- Ahipara Community development plan.
- Awanui Community development Plan (revised 2018).
- Broadwood community development plan.
- Kaikohe community development plan.
- Kaitaia community development plan.
- Karikari Community development plan.
- Kohukohu Community development plan.
- Moerewa community development plan.
- Ohaeawai community development plan.
- Okaihau community development plan.
- Opononi – Omapere Community development plan.
- Pukenui- Houhora Community development plan.
- Rawene community development plan.
- Taipa,Oruru, Parapara, Paranui and Peria Community development plan.

- Totara North Community Plan.
- Towai Community development Plan.
- Whangaroa Community development plan.

The Community Development Plans themselves can be found at:

[https://www.fndc.govt.nz/Your-District/Community-Development/Community-Development-Plans?dlv_OC%20CL%20Public%20DocLib%20Relative=\(pageindex=1\)](https://www.fndc.govt.nz/Your-District/Community-Development/Community-Development-Plans?dlv_OC%20CL%20Public%20DocLib%20Relative=(pageindex=1))

Where relevant to a particular topic, these plans have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

5 Context

5.1 The Far North District

The Far North District is the northernmost territorial local authority in New Zealand and is the 14th largest district by land area.

Around half of the population reside in small urban settlements located throughout the District, the largest of which are Kerikeri and Paihia on the east coast, Kaitāia to the north and Kaikohe, located between the east and west coast. The populations within these larger urban areas range from approximately 4,000 to 6,500 people. The rest of the population lives in rural or semi-rural settlements. The District's population density is around nine people per km², which is average for provincial New Zealand.

The Far North is considered a biodiversity 'hotspot', hosting unique habitats such as coastal dune lakes and harbouring extensive tracts of public conservation land and native forests. The coastline of the Far North is also one of the District's defining geographic features - it is unique, diverse and extensive. The coast, along with the District's unique biodiversity and rich heritage, make the Far North an attractive place to live and visit.

With a lengthy history of Māori and Pakeha settlement, the Far North District has a rich and nationally significant heritage. Key examples include the Hokianga Harbour (Hokianga-nui-a-Kupe) on the west coast which according to tradition was the landing place of Kupe, who is regarded as the first to set foot on Aotearoa; and on the east coast, the Bay of Islands is home to the Waitangi Treaty House and Okiato, which was the nation's first capital.

5.1.1 Population and Growth

The estimated resident population of the Far North is 71,000⁵. Population growth since the 2013 Census has been above the national average, with an average annual increase of approximately 2% between 2013 to 2020.

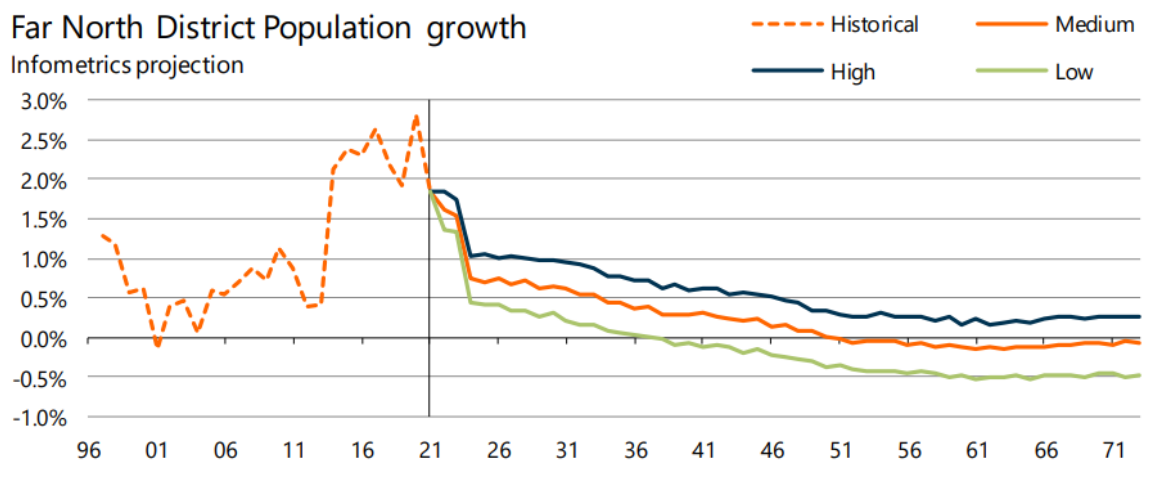
The population is forecast to increase at a rate of approximately 0.5% per annum between now and 2049, resulting in a total population of approximately 83,200 people⁶ by 2049. Most of this growth is projected to occur in the Far North's main urban centres (Kaitāia, Kaikohe, Kerikeri and Paihia) and the Doubtless Bay area.

From a high level of analysis, the Far North District's annual population growth fluctuated between 0% and 1% through the 2000s, lagging Northland and New Zealand overall. Far North's growth picked up in the 2010s, closely tracking Northland and New Zealand with growth between 2% and 3% in the mid-2010s. Far North's growth eased to a still-strong 1.8% in 2021 as international net migration dried

⁵ Stats NZ subregional estimate @ June 2020

⁶ Far North District Population Projections, prepared by Infometrics, May 2022

up amid COVID-19 border restrictions. Under a medium growth scenario, Far North population growth is projected to remain above 1% for 2022 and 2023, as the border reopening and 2021 Migrant Visa is expected to sustain strongly positive international net migration.



From 2024 onwards, population growth in Far North is projected to slow down compared to Northland and New Zealand, but remain well above the Far North’s growth in the 2000’s. Over the longer term, population growth in the Far North is projected to lag Northland and New Zealand. This reflects underlying economic shifts, as service-based industries expand and primary industries decline, which lends to stronger growth in larger centres.

Importantly, the age structure of the Far North District is forecast to change substantially. The 65-years-and-older age group has been the Far North’s fastest growing in the past two decades, growing 113% between 2001 to 2021. It will continue to be the fastest growing age group in the coming two decades, projected to grow 64% between 2021 and 2041 under the medium scenario as the last of the baby boomer generation transitions into the age group. This age group is projected to grow from 14,800 in 2021 to 24,300 in 2041.

The Far North has one of the highest deprivation rates in the country. The most deprived areas are located on the west coast and the northern tip of the district, north of Pukenui. The least deprived areas located on the east coast, including Kerikeri, Paihia and Kāpiro.

5.1.2 Economic Overview

Economic growth in the District averaged 2% per annum over the 10-year period 2009-2019 compared with an average of 2.5% per annum in the national economy.

The District accounts for 0.8% of the national economy and 31% of the Northland regional economy. Tourism and Primary Production (agriculture, forestry and fishing) are by far the greatest contributors to the local economy, with these sectors combined contributing 25% to the Gross Domestic Product in 2019. By comparison, the contribution of these sectors to the national GDP is around 11%⁷.

5.1.3 Primary Production⁸

Primary production activities are an important contributor to jobs and economy of both the Northland region and the District comprising some 1,937 businesses and 2,587 jobs in 2016. Recent data shows that a steady decline of combined land based primary production sector businesses in the district has continued through to 2019. In 2019, the sector employed 2,769 people within 1,688 businesses. It

⁷ Far North District Economic Profile, Infometrics, <https://ecoprofile.infometrics.co.nz/Far%2bNorth%2bDistrict>

⁸ From: Rural Environmental Economic Analysis. Prepared for Far North District Council by 4Sight Consulting and M.E. Consulting, August 2020.

makes up 21% of total businesses in the district (down 5 percent compared to the share in 2016). In contrast, this sector accounted for 13% of total district employment in 2019.

Overall, when employment grows and businesses decrease, it suggests that activity is being consolidated into fewer larger firms, and/or changes at the industry level within the sector. This growth has primarily occurred in the Horticulture and Fruit growing industry.

Under a 'business as usual' scenario, the economic outlook for Far North's primary production sector is positive – with a long-term average annual increase in employment of 1.5% overall (2016 – 2043), or total growth of 41% (just over 1,000 jobs). All sectors are projected to experience some employment growth, but the above average growth rates are expected in forestry, dairy and apiculture. Due to expected increases in productivity and commodity prices/exports, gross output and value added generated by the primary production is projected to rise at a faster rate than employment (83% and 79% respectively between 2016 and 2043). This equates to an increase in value added of \$43m by 2023 and \$161m by 2043 from the primary production sectors combined.

Horticulture and Fruit Growing

Horticulture activities are distributed across an estimated 4,460 hectares of land in Northland. With its subtropical climate and wide diversity of soil, Northland has a large variety of crops thriving in the region, with a quarter to a third of produce, exported. The largest crop is Kiwifruit, with around 3.6m trays of green and gold Kiwifruit produced annually. Citrus fruit are very popular and well-established in the region, while blueberries are an emerging, but rapidly growing, crop. Another significant product is avocados, with Northland crops accounting for nearly half (45%) of NZ's total crop.

In the Far North, Kerikeri is particularly well-known for its citrus, with mandarin, lemons and navel oranges being most popular. The District is furthermore, becoming well recognised as one of the prime subtropical growing areas for avocados. This has become evidence by land use conversions from pastoral farming to avocado orchard developments.

The Horticulture and Fruit Growing sector in Far North District is estimated to comprise some 273 businesses and 763 workers. The total turnover (gross output) of the sector is estimated at \$89m (from all sources of business income), which contributes \$37m to the district economy (value added).

Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming

Around half (49%) of the national sheep flock is located on the North Island, and around 70% of the country's beef cattle. The Agricultural Production Survey (APS) data published by Statistics New Zealand (SNZ), for June 2017, shows total beef cattle numbers in Northland had increased by around 7% from the previous year, while sheep numbers in Northland had fallen from 366,000 in 2016, to 328,000 in 2017. Sheep numbers in Northland currently represents around 1.2% (i.e. down from 1.3% in 2016) of the total flock in NZ, while Beef cattle in Northland makes up around 11% of the national herd (up from 10% in 2016).

Sheep and beef farming in the District comprise of 936 businesses and 848 workers. The average number of workers per business is around 1 (2016) and the total turnover (gross output) of the sector is estimated at \$171m (from all sources of business income), which contributes \$69m to the district economy (value added).

The sector is made up of an estimated 6,846 property parcels, 98% of which are in the rural environment – the majority being located in the Rural Production Zone (an estimated 6,103 parcels), with 457 property parcels located in the General Coastal Zone. These properties cover an estimated 261,725 ha.

Dairy Farming

Nationally, the total effective hectares in dairy farming the 2016/17 season were 1.73 million – a decrease of about 23,000 ha on the previous season. Similarly, dairy cow numbers have fallen by

nearly 220,000 since 2016 across the country. The majority of dairy herds (72.6%) are located in the North Island, with 9% of New Zealand's dairy herds located in Northland.

The Far North accounts for around 2% of the total effective hectares. The District is reported to have 254 herds comprising of more than 73,000 cows. Owner operators account for the majority (79%) of operators, with share milkers making up the balance. The dairy cattle farming sector in the Far North comprises of 324 businesses and 651 workers. It is therefore a third of the size of the sheep and beef farming sector in business count terms, but three quarters the size of the sheep and beef sector in employment terms. Dairy farming is the second largest employing industry in Northland (2,311), accounting for 3.3% of the region's total employment. When including other dairy related employment (in processing and wholesaling), dairy jobs contribute nearly 5% of the total regional employment in Northland.

The average number of workers per business is around 2 (2016) making it twice as labour intensive as sheep and beef farming. The total turnover (gross output) of the sector is estimated at \$161m (from all sources of business income)⁹³, which contributes \$52m to the district economy (value added). The major share of property parcels is located in the Rural Production Zone (an estimated 1,653 parcels), with just 49 property parcels located in the General Coastal Zone and a scattering elsewhere. These properties cover an estimated 49,030ha.

Poultry, Deer and Other Livestock Farming (excluding Apiculture)

The poultry, deer and other livestock sector in the Far North comprises of 64 businesses and 37 workers. Just under half (42%) of these businesses fall within the 'Horse farming' industry, with a further 37% in the 'Other livestock farming not elsewhere classified' industry. Pig farming makes up 7% of business as does deer farming, and poultry farming comprises 6%.

The average number of workers per business is around 1 (2016) and the total turnover (gross output) of the sector is estimated at just \$2.1m (from all sources of business income), which contributes \$0.7m to the District economy (value added).

The sector is made up of an estimated 64 property parcels, 97% of which are in the rural environment. The major share of property parcels is located in the Rural Production Zone (an estimated 59 parcels), with a few elsewhere. These properties cover an estimated 1,975ha.

Forestry and Logging

Forestry contributes \$3.55b to NZ's GDP, \$1.39b from forestry and logging and \$2.16b from downstream activity. Nationally, the net stocked plantation forest area (at 1 April 2016), was estimated to be more than 1.7m hectares, more than 90% of which is privately owned.

Forestry is the third largest primary sector in terms of export revenue and logs, wood and wood articles are New Zealand's fourth highest export commodity. Some 57% of harvested logs and varying percentages of processed forest products are destined for export, with China accounting for almost half (44%) of the total value of exports in 2016.

The export value of forest products for the year ending June 2017, was estimated at \$5.47b. The export earnings of forestry in NZ is estimated to be around \$2,800 per hectare. MPI anticipates the export returns from NZ forest products to be in excess of \$5.7b for the year ending June 2018, and \$6.3b by 2021.

Boasting a strong forestry and wood processing industry, Northland predominantly grows Radiata pine (also known as NZ pine or Monterey pine), a very versatile wood that is used in a wide range of industries from construction to furniture. The wood produced in Northland has a reputation for being amongst the highest density wood in NZ, which is said to be mainly as a result of the warmer climate, allowing the trees to grow consistently year-round.

The Forestry and Logging sector in the Far North comprises of some 280 businesses and 173 workers. The average number of workers per business is around 1 (2016) and the total turnover (gross output) of the sector is estimated at \$134m (from all sources of business income), which contributes \$42m to the district economy (value added).

The sector is made up of an estimated 1,566 property parcels, 84% of which are in the rural environment. The major share of property parcels is located in the Rural Production Zone (an estimated 1,219 parcels), with 89 property parcels located in the General Coastal Zone. In total, these properties cover an estimated 125,398 ha.

Apiculture

New Zealand's mānuka honey export industry is worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year. Apiculture contributes an estimated \$5.1 billion per year to New Zealand's economy, providing pollination services, exports of live bees, honey and honeydew, and other bee products including beeswax, propolis and venom. In the 2016/17 season, the annual honey yield (all types) amounted to around 14,855 tonnes (compared to a 5-year average of 17,977 tonnes). The honey yield for the Far North District was estimated by M.E to be approximately 1,050 tonnes in the 2016/17 season – approximately 7% of the national yield.

Approximately 475 beekeepers are registered in the Far North, owning some 77,570 hives in over 4,440 apiaries. Hives are however relatively easy to relocate, and this count of registered hives may not accurately represent the number of hives situated in the Far North at any one time (particularly over summer during the mānuka flowering season). Beekeeping enterprises registered in the Far North District account for about 9% of the total number of beekeepers on the North Island, and about 6% of the total beekeeping enterprises across the country.

Taking into account the wider apiculture sector within the District (i.e. not limited to those businesses for which it is their primary activity), it was estimated that the total gross output in 2016 was close to \$36.6m. This is expected to have contributed \$13.1m of value added to the district economy.

Highly Versatile Soils

A key issue associated with the use of land for primary production, particularly horticulture, is the availability of highly versatile and productive soils. These soils are rare, covering approximately 9% of Northland's total area, yet they sustain the highest levels of primary production value added contribution to the economy. In the Far North District there are a range of primary production sectors that are reliant upon highly versatile soils. In total, there are an estimated 64,436 ha of class 1-3 soils in Far North. The gross output of primary production sectors on highly versatile soils in the Far North is estimated at \$293.7m (2016). These primary production properties contribute \$107.8m of value added to the Far North economy (6% of total District value added in 2016).

The loss and fragmentation of highly versatile and productive soils and productive land generally to non-productive land uses such as rural residential and rural lifestyle is seen as constraining these primary production sectors and putting potential future growth at risk, in particular horticulture and fruit growing businesses that are reliant upon access to high quality versatile soils.

5.1.4 Business Land⁹

The Far North had approximately 1,450 hectares of commercial and industrial land in 2019. The majority of this land was occupied, at 1,394 hectares with 56 hectares of vacant land.

There were four key areas in the District with over 100 hectares of commercial and industrial land. These were Karikari Peninsula with 340 hectares, Matawaia-Taumarere (around Kawakawa and

⁹ From: Commercial and industrial land tool. Prepared for Far North District Council by BERL, May 2020.

Moerewa) with 125 hectares, Puketotara (adjacent to Kerikeri) with 103 hectares, and Rangitihi (adjacent to Kaitaia) with 150 hectares.

There were also five areas in the District with over 700 employees in commercial and industrial industries. These were Kaikohe with 784 employees, Kaitaia East with 1,599 employees, Kaitaia West with 719 employees, Kerikeri Central with 1,917 employees, and Paihia with 870 employees.

The use of the 1,450 hectares of commercial and industrial land is provided in Table 1 and the breakdown of employment by sector is provided in Table 2.

Table 1: Commercial and Industrial land use breakdown (2019, from BERL 2020)

Land Use	Land Area
Commercial accommodation	486 ha (including 316 ha in Carrington, Karikari Peninsula)
Heavy Industrial	300 ha
Light Industrial	110 ha
Commercial Tourist	100 ha
Other Commercial and Industrial	225 ha

Table 2: Commercial and Industrial land employment (2019, from BERL 2020)

Sector	Number of Employees
Commercial retail accommodation	3,482
Commercial social	2,091
Industrial service	1,582
Commercial Accommodation	1,138
Commercial Office	1,087
Other Commercial and Industrial	.3,074

Under a 'business as usual' scenario, it is expected that employment in industrial and commercial industries will increase by 2,706 employees, between 2019 and 2045, to 15,160 employees. The largest increases in employment, across 2019 and 2045, are expected in commercial social, commercial retail and industrial warehouse industries.

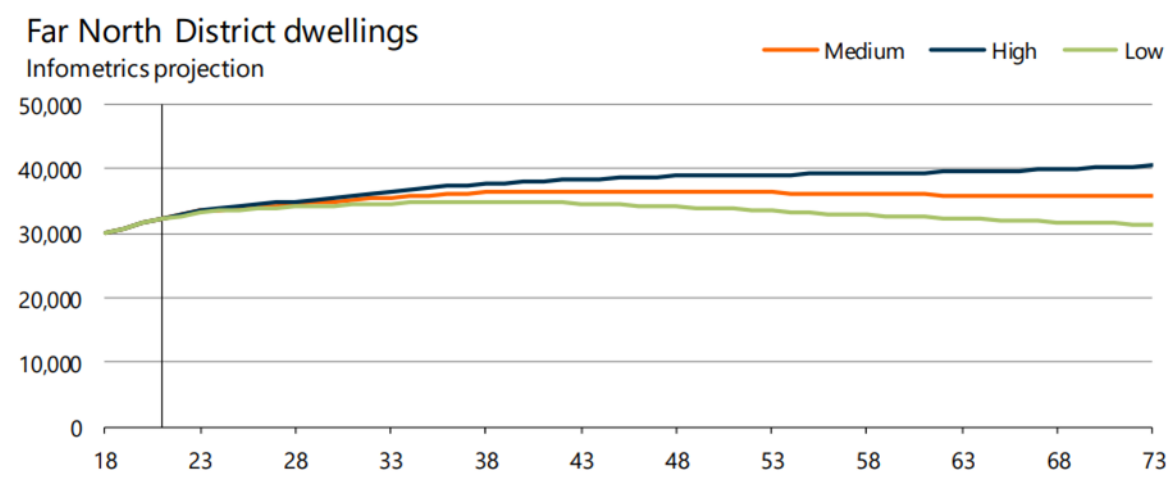
Between 2019 and 2045, it is expected that a further 150 hectares of commercial and industrial land will be needed, to cater for the projected increase in employment. The largest increases across the 26 year period, are expected in commercial social with 36 additional hectares, and industrial food with 29 additional hectares. It is also expected that just 31 hectares of the growth between 2019 and 2045, can be accommodated by currently vacant land in the areas experiencing growth.

Under a growth scenario, it is expected that employment in industrial and commercial industries will increase by 5,026 employees, between 2019 and 2045, to 17,480 employees. The largest increases are expected in commercial retail, commercial social and industrial service industries. Between 2019 and 2045, it is expected that a further 171 hectares of commercial and industrial land will be needed. The largest land area increases across the 26 year period, are expected in the commercial social with 36 additional hectares, industrial food with 34 additional hectares, and industrial services with 28 additional hectares. It is also expected that 31 hectares of this additional growth between 2019 and 2045, can be accommodated by currently vacant land in the areas experiencing growth.

5.1.5 Housing Supply¹⁰

Settlement and development of towns in the Far North was historically related to farming, forestry and settlement around shipping ports. Since the 1980s the permanent population has increased slowly but steadily, mainly on the east coast. The Far North, along with nearby neighbours (Kaipara District and Whāngārei District) are some of the more rural in the country, historically with little more than half the population in urban areas. In the last 20 years, an average of 312 residential building consents were issued in the Far North District per year.

The number of dwellings in the Far North is projected to grow from 30,200 in 2018 to 35,800 in 2034, before peaking at 36,600 in 2046, easing thereafter to reach 35,800 in 2073 (refer to Far North District dwellings graph below). Under the high scenario, the number of dwellings is projected to grow to 36,800 in 2034, growing further to reach 40,500 in 2073. Under the low scenario, the number of dwellings is projected to reach 34,800 in 2034, peak at 34,900 in 2038, and decline to 31,400 in 2073.



The Karikari Peninsula-Maungataniwha area accounted for 21% of all residential development in the 2006-2013 and 13% in the 2006-2013 period. Kerikeri Township Surrounds have been consistently high in terms of new dwelling additions since 2001 and contribute between 46 and 64 new dwellings to the District on average per annum. The Bay of Islands Rural area has been experiencing increasing levels of dwelling additions with around 46 new dwellings per annum in the 2001-2006 period and 50 per annum in the latest 2006-2013 period. Mangonui-Coopers Beach-Cable Bay has also experienced relatively steady levels of new housing additions with many holiday homes and hillside estates built in the past 15 years. Since 2013, both residential building consent numbers and the numbers of completed new dwellings has been on the rise in the District with every year since 2013 experiencing higher numbers of new residential building consents.

Houses are the main type of dwelling consent issued in the Far North as the District is not a totally occupied urban environment with built environment constraints and still has room for growth around existing towns and settlements, both inland and on the coast. 92% of all dwelling consents issued since 2007 were for standalone houses (1,874 in total) whereas only 8% (152) were for "other" types of dwellings.

Rates of infill development vary by area due to planning controls and the age of housing stock. Factors such as proximity to amenities, services and places of employment in townships and other established centres as well as housing demand also play a part in determining rates of infill development in different parts of the District.

¹⁰ From: Far North District Population Projections, prepared by Infometrics, May 2022

Russell and Rawhiti and surrounds, Kaikohe Township, Kohukohu and Hokianga North area and Kawakawa – Moerewa are expected to have low levels of growth in the future and coupled with ageing in place, some of these areas will lose population. Kerikeri Township Surrounds is estimated to accommodate 19% of the Far North’s population in 2021. This is projected to grow to 25% by 2073, as growth in the area outpaces the district overall.

Other notable areas which will experience high levels of residential development are Mangonui - Coopers Beach - Cable Bay, Karikari Peninsula – Maungataniwha and Kaeo - Matauri Bay – Whangaroa.

5.1.6 Sufficient development capacity in respect of housing to meet the expected demands of the district

Council has a statutory requirement under section 31 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) to establish, implement and review objectives, policies and methods to ensure that there is sufficient development capacity in respect of housing land to meet the expected demands of the district in the short, medium and long term. An assessment of plan enabled development capacity has been undertaken using zone information taken from the PDP and parcel data sourced from Land Information New Zealand (dated January 2022).

A sample has been taken for this analysis utilising the higher growth numbers identified across the Statistical Area 2 geography (SA2) areas. These SA2 areas generally represent the following communities:

- Kerikeri
- Kaitaia
- Kaikohe
- Paihia, Haruru & Opuia
- Coopers Beach, Cable Bay, Taipa and Mangonui

The reports demonstrate that in all instances that there is sufficient plan enabled development capacity within each of these study areas to meet the expected demand of the District in the short, medium and long term under both medium and high growth scenarios. This is achieved utilising one or more of the following zones in the PDP:

- General Residential
- Mixed Use
- Rural Residential

The plan enabled development capacity reports are attached at **Appendix 7**. The demographics and economics consultancy “Infometrics” was commissioned by Council in 2021 to produce projections of population, households, and dwellings to support a range of planning activities. A report that documents these projections is provided at **Appendix 8**. The report also goes into the projections at a district and sub-district level.

The analysis of plan enabled capacity together with the population projections provided by Infometrics combine to provide a picture of how housing demand in the district’s key urban centres is being addressed by the proposed district plan policies and methods.

5.2 Operative District Plan

The Operative Plan has been the District’s principal planning tool used to achieve the sustainable management purpose of the Act over the last 10 years. The Operative Plan was made partly operative in 2007 and became fully operative in September 2009. Since that time, it has been subject to some 22 plan changes (both Council initiated and private) and a range of minor changes, including in response to national direction.

A list of these plan changes is provided in **Appendix 3**.

5.2.1 Drivers for the District Plan Review

Council has a statutory obligation under section 79 of the RMA to commence a review of its District Plan if it has not been reviewed or the subject of a change during the previous 10 years.

Originally, Council proposed to undertake a 'rolling review' of the Operative Plan, whereby specific sections were reviewed and updated in a progressive way. However, in February 2015 Council resolved to undertake a comprehensive review of the Operative Plan. The primary reasons for this comprehensive approach include:

Need for Review

A number of elements of the Operative Plan have been subject to review since it was made partially operative in 2007; however, it is estimated, that approximately 80% of the plan has not yet been reviewed or updated.

The Operative Plan predated many of the national and regional planning documents, including national policy statements, the National Planning Standards and the updated Northland RPS that are discussed in Section 3. These higher-order directions have a significant bearing on the content and direction of the district plan. Additionally, a range of legislative reforms have occurred since the preparation of the Operative Plan. These include providing additional functions for district councils.

Improved Workability

The Operative Plan is nationally, one of the more "pure" forms of effects based plans. This may provide the basis for theoretical achievement of sustainable management; however, many users find the plan structure difficult to interpret and implement. Simplification and clarity of the plan structure and provisions is required to enhance the plan's utility. There are many means of achieving these ends, including electronic methods (e-planning), and more activities-based planning approaches. A consolidated plan review will allow for easier implementation should wide reaching amendments be determined as being appropriate.

Accordingly, a more consolidated and comprehensive review of the Operative Plan was proposed to improve strategic alignment and achieve more balanced and integrated outcomes, especially for responding to supply and demand issues, integrating land use and infrastructure servicing and enabling participatory processes, including more effective Tangata Whenua participation, and consideration of District Plan structure and accessibility.

5.2.2 Approach of the Operative Plan

As discussed above, the Operative Plan is one of New Zealand's most 'effects based plan'. An effects-based plan is one where the plan focuses on controlling the impact (or effects) of an activity, irrespective of what that activity is. In contrast, an activities-based approach assumes these impacts and focuses on controlling the activity itself. The two different approaches are considered to lie at opposite ends of a spectrum for plan development.

Activities-based plans provide more certainty for a plan user as they specifically outline the type of activities that are allowed or not. An effects-based approach provides more flexibility because they focus on a desirable level of impact (e.g. noise, dust, bulk and location, vehicle access, car parking) that an activity should have regardless of what the specific activity is.

Most district plans use a combination of activity and effects based provisions and a move to this approach is more consistent with national practice and Planning standards.

5.2.3 Review of the effectiveness of the Operative Plan

Councils are required to gather information, undertake monitoring and keep records in order to effectively carry out their functions under Section 35 of the Act. This includes preparing a report on

the effectiveness and efficiency of the rules, policies and other methods in its plan at least every five years and make this report publicly available.

Council prepared an Efficiency and Effectiveness report in 2015 and more recently in 2020, with the latter covering the period from 2013 to 2018. This report is attached as Appendix 4 and key findings are briefly summarised below.

- In the past five years, the number of resource consents granted has consistently risen each year with both subdivision and land use consents seeing a marked increase across the reporting period.
- 1185 building consents were granted while only 407 land use consents were granted. This indicates that a certain amount of development can occur in the District without triggering the need for resource consent.
- The largest proportion of resource consents were granted in the Kerikeri and northern communities (i.e. Kaitaia and surrounds). This analysis matches with known growth trends in both of these areas.
- The largest proportion of resource consents occur in the rural environment. In particular, the Rural Production zone has seen the largest number of resource consents for any one zone. This may be due to a number of factors:
 - the land use rules in urban environments may be less stringent and therefore overall the need for a resource consent may be triggered less;
 - there are activities occurring in the rural environment that are not anticipated by the current plan or that the rural zones are restrictive for the types of activities that are occurring in these areas;
 - there is currently an inadequate supply of urban land and therefore development is pushed into the rural environment.
- There was a high number of resource consents required throughout the coastal zones in the reporting period. This represents an increasing pressure for development in coastal areas, which again is in line with known trends.

5.2.4 Summary

In summary, the need to review the Operative Plan was largely driven by:

- A statutory imperative to review a district plan every ten years;
- Changes in the legislative framework and higher order statutory instruments, meaning that the Operative Plan is unlikely to give effect to national and regional direction as required by the Act;
- A desire for a more workable and usable plan, that integrates effect and activity based controls;
- The opportunity provided by a comprehensive review to undertake for effect engagement with its community and tangata whenua.

6 Consultation and Engagement

Given the importance of this comprehensive review of the district plan, and in light of the drivers for the review, Council has undertaken an extensive process of engagement with tangata whenua and its community. Key stages in this engagement are summarised below with the summary reports from each stage of the engagement appended.

6.1 Community Engagement

6.1.1 2016 “Put a pin on it” engagement

The district planning team undertook a consultation exercise with Far North communities in 12 locations across the District, at a number of A&P shows and via appointment in the pop up shop at the John Butler Centre in Kerikeri in the first seven months of 2016. The purpose of these exercises was to understand first hand from our communities what their issues are and what was working or not working with respect to the District Plan.

Paired with this exercise was an online facility for consultation called ‘Put a Pin on it’, this enabled the community to contribute through the use of an interactive web map, where it was possible to locate the source of the issue or feedback. In total 823 separate issues were pinned to the map and at least 140 individuals contributed.

The feedback was sourced in all 12 locations with Paihia, Russell and Kerikeri/Waipapa contributing the most. The feedback covered a broad range of topics, the most notable being land use, infrastructure provision and coastal amenity.

A summary of the consultation undertaken, and the feedback is provided in Appendix 5 of this overview report.

6.1.2 2018 Draft District Plan

The District Planning department engaged with Far North communities between September-December 2018, to encourage feedback on the Draft District Plan 2018 (DDP). The programme was a three-pronged approach consisting of:

- Targeted stakeholder engagement September-December 2018;
- Community engagement roadshow from the 3 November 13 December 2018, visiting 13 communities throughout the district; and
- An online presence through website and social media advertising.

The DDP was made publicly available via Council’s e-platform ‘Isoplan’, the Lets Plan Together website and, in hard copy at Council’s Service Centres and at community events.

Council received 849 feedback points from a total of 249 feedback entries from the community and stakeholders. Of that:

- Entries came from non-government Infrastructure providers
- 15 entries were on behalf of Associations, Trusts, Incorporated Societies, Limited Companies and ‘Groups’
- 2 entries came from Sector Groups
- 9 entries were on behalf of Government Agencies, Departments and Local Government
- 218 entries came from individuals

The summary of feedback is contained in Appendix 6 of this overview report.

6.1.3 2021 Draft District Plan feedback

An updated, and more detailed draft District Plan was released in early 2021 in the new digital ePlan format. This draft has been developed in more depth, building on the policy framework progressed through the previous engagement. It responds to new directions in resource management issues, is subject to the new National Planning Standards and provides alignment to higher order policy instruments. The draft included the provision of maps and full draft plan text and other spatial planning elements including maps containing zones and resource overlays.

Community engagement via the ‘jump on board’ roadshow (March 2021) allowed for the community to become aware, understand and engage with the suite of Council planning documents, whilst

comprehending the overall strategic direction on the draft District Plan. Face to face meetings with the community allowed for instruction on the use of the e-plan format and for awareness of the direction of the new district plan.

Far North communities were invited to provide feedback via a structured feedback questionnaire as well as an opportunity for open commentary. The questionnaire was framed under the context of the nine separate Significant Resource Management Issues. This allowed for a direct line of understanding of why certain zones, rules and policies and other methods have been applied in order to remedy the 'big picture' problem statements.

When the formal feedback period closed in May 2021, there were some 321 survey responses, and approximately 330 individual pieces of feedback outside of the survey. Council continued to engage with agencies, sector, and advocacy groups past the closing of the feedback period.

A synopsis of the key feedback received, aligned to the SRMIs, is provided as Appendix 7.

Individual feedback was analysed and addressed, as appropriate, through changes and refinements to the draft provisions in the preparation of the district plan for notification. Where relevant to a particular topic, the response to the feedback is addressed in the topic section 32 report.

6.2 Strategic Resource Management Issues

As a result of engagement with its community (see above), feedback was consolidated into nine Significant Resource Management Issues (SRMI) in early 2017. These SRMIs, some of which were carried over from the Operative District Plan, formed an important basis for the District Plan review process. Following further engagement, a tenth SRMI – Significant Natural Areas – was added. While the Act does not require a district plan to identify SRMI within its content, they assist in giving relevance to the objectives, policies and methods (including rules). They also provide a guidance to the individual topic section 32 evaluations as to the significance of the issue and hence, the level of detail that is required.

The SRMIs are listed below and are contained within the 'Description of the District' Chapter to align with the National Planning Standards. Further detail of how they are addressed in the Proposed Plan can be found at <https://letsplantogether.org.nz/>.

1. Partnerships with Tangata Whenua

Historically it has been difficult to build strong partnerships between Council and tangata whenua due to lack of resources, awareness and capacity within both parties. Through the legislative process RMA, there is limited use of tikanga, matauranga māori, and māori values to express kaitiakitanga in the management of resources.

Development of Māori freehold and Treaty Settlement land can be complex because of multiple ownership, no governance structure, financing and involvement of multiple government agencies. As part of the District Plan Review we are focusing on improving our planning tools (zoning, overlays etc.) to enable tangata whenua to use land in a manner which exercises their kāwanatanga and rangatiratanga.

2. Rural Sustainability

There are competing demands for a range of land use activities in our Rural Environment. A permissive planning framework has led, in some areas, to incompatible land uses and significant adverse effects on rural character, amenity and indigenous biodiversity.

In some cases, productive land and highly versatile soils have been used in a way that compromises the future viability of primary production activities, such as horticulture and agriculture, and inappropriately uses existing infrastructure and services.

The current Rural Production Zone applies a single set of provisions to the majority of the District, which does not address the specific issues faced by our different rural areas and communities.

It is also important that our District Plan reflects that our rural settlements differ in their ability to access the infrastructure and services available in urban centres.

3. Natural Hazards, Resilience and Climate Change

Our communities are vulnerable to a number of natural hazards. A history of settlement on flood plains and cultural associations to areas close to the coast has exacerbated our vulnerability to the risk of climate change and existing natural hazards.

Inadequate identification and controls over the management of natural hazards and climate change has resulted in a greater exposure to risk. Existing infrastructure due to its location is at risk of hazard events, impacting on the health, safety and resilience of our communities.

4. Urban Sustainability

A permissive approach to development has compromised urban character, amenity and the ability to provide infrastructure. A number of commercial and industrial activities are located in unserviced rural areas because of lower land cost and minimal regulation. In some cases, this means existing infrastructure is used inefficiently, and it makes infrastructure planning and deployment difficult to forecast.

Furthermore, some urban zoned land (commercial, mixed-use, industrial, and residential) – where we should be developing – is not currently serviced by infrastructure.

We need to make sure that the right activities are happening in the right places.

The National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity (2018) requires us to provide for future development capacity. As we make these forecasts, we need to consider what our communities can afford, and ensure those areas are resilient to natural hazards and climate change.

5. Indigenous Biodiversity

We have limited information on the location and quality of our indigenous biodiversity, which means it is difficult for landowners to protect and manage this resource. Where indigenous biodiversity occurs on private land, there is tension between the public benefit from its protection and management, and the costs – both perceived and real – on the landowner.

There are significant areas of indigenous biodiversity on Māori land. Whilst we want to protect indigenous biodiversity in these areas, we need to make sure that cultural practices, such as Rongoā Māori, are able to continue.

6. Affordable Infrastructure

The Far North District has a low population density with diverse social and economic communities. We are subject to a range of natural hazards, such as flooding and coastal erosion, and must consider the impacts of climate change. This has resulted in parts of our District having limited access to efficient, resilient and affordable infrastructure and services and incompatible land uses.

We need to make sure that the right activities are happening in the right places in order to use our existing infrastructure efficiently and ensure its affordability now and into the future.

7. Heritage Management

The Far North has a rich history. The stories told through this history are very much part of the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our communities today. It is important that our heritage is recognised through the District Plan so that these stories, and the artefacts that give structure to them, are protected.

A number of our historic buildings, objects, trees, archaeological sites, cultural heritage and sites of cultural significance to Maori are not adequately protected, or – in some cases – have not yet been formally identified. Consequently, there is a risk that sites are damaged or lost.

8. Outstanding Landscapes and Features

Council is required to protect the Far North’s outstanding natural landscapes and features. There is a tension between this requirement and the need to provide landowners with the ability to develop.

We need to protect outstanding natural landscapes and features from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. At the same time, we must enable Maori to benefit from their ancestral lands in ways that do not compromise features or landscapes that are deemed worthy of protection.

9. Coastal Management

We need to preserve and protect the natural character of the coastal environment. It is also necessary to provide for appropriate access and development in the right places.

Our coastal settlements put pressure on coastal resources and amenity. Continuing to build in the coastal environment exacerbates the risk to people, property, and infrastructure, particularly from the effects of natural hazards and climate change.

10. Significant Natural Areas

Our District is home to a range of unique landscapes, species and habitats, many of which are under threat. Under the Regional Policy Statement for Northland, we are required to identify these habitats and to protect them through a District Plan. While there are already rules in the current District Plan to manage these habitats, we are now required to identify these areas and manage them more specifically in a new District Plan.

Last year we collaborated with the other Northland councils on a project to map and identify SNA within each District. The new mapping has increased the accuracy and knowledge of these natural areas in Northland. Mapping identifies approximately 42% of our District contains these potentially sensitive environments. This is an increase from around 30% last mapped in the 1990s.

6.3 Consultation with iwi authorities

In May 2021 letters were sent to the 11 mandated iwi authorities for the purposes of the RMA, 8 hapū who have hapū environmental management plans lodged with council, and who are not mandated iwi authorities and 3 Māori Land Incorporations and 1 Ahu Whenua Trust (see list below).

11 Mandated Iwi Authorities for the purposes of the RMA

- Ngāti Kuri
- Te Aupōuri
- NgaiTakoto
- Te Rarawa
- Ngāti Kahu
- NgātiKahu ki Whangaroa
- Ngāpuhi ki Whaingaroa
- Ngāti Hine
- Ngāpuhi
- Ngāti Wai
- Te Roroa

8 Hapū with Hapū Environmental Management Plans lodged with Council, and who are not mandated iwi authorities for the purposes of the RMA.

- Ahipara Takiwa
- Haititaimarangai Marae

- Ngāti Torehina
- Ngāti Rēhia
- Kororāreka Marae
- Ngāti Kuta
- Ngāti Rangi
- NgātiKorokoro, Ngāti Wharara me Te Pouaka

3 Māori Land Incorporations

- Matauri X Incorporation
- Muriwhenua Incorporation
- Parengarenga Incorporation

1 Ahu Whenua Trust

- Te Tii (Waitangi) B3 Trust

The letters provided information on the draft district plan review and invited engagement and feedback on the draft district plan. The letters were followed up with phone calls and face to face hui with a number of the iwi and hapū groups.

In September 2021, funding options were provided to the Iwi/Hapū/Landowner groups to assist them with technical advice to provide written feedback on the draft plan.

The first option was the services of a consultant planner engaged by Council to provide technical advice to targeted iwi / hapū and Māori landowner groups in respect to the review of the draft District Plan in accordance with s32 Iwi Review Process. The service to be delivered by way of engagement with specified iwi / hapū or Māori landowner groups with the option of individual or collective hui. The key deliverable was to provide written feedback. The following Iwi and Hapū groups agreed to participate in this service, Te Roroa, Ngāti Kuta, NgāiTakoto, Te Aupōuri, NgātiKahu ki Whangaroa, Ngāpuhi ki Whangaroa and Matauri X Incorporation.

The second option was a direct funding agreement entered into with Council, the following groups chose this option: Ngāti Kurī, Te Rarawa and Ngāti Rēhia.

The following iwi did not choose either option, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine and Ngāti Kahu. There was no response to communication from Ngāti Wai.

Formal written feedback was received from Te Rarawa, Ngāti Rēhia, Ngāti Kuta, Ngāpuhi ki Whangaroa, Ngāti Kurī, Ngāti Kahu ki Whangaroa and Matauri X Incorporation. In addition general feedback was provided from the consultant planner to which the following iwi provided general agreement but no formal written feedback within the timeframe required: Te Aupōuri, NgāiTakoto and Te Roroa.

The feedback received can be summarised into broad themes as follows:

- Tangata Whenua Overview - there is a need for improved integration of the Tangata Whenua policies throughout the PDP;
- Sites and Areas of Significance to Māori - a comprehensive review of the schedule of sites and areas of significance to Māori o review existing and include new sites is required;
- Māori Purpose Zone and Treaty Settlement Overlay - there is general support for the Māori Purpose Zone and Treaty Settlement Land overlay, however greater flexibility for economic development is required and in more enabling provisions for papakāinga.
- There are ongoing conflicts between the protection regime of the District plan overlays and the many landholdings owned by Māori and their dreams and aspirations to promote land use and development.

The topic-based Section 32 reports provide a detailed overview of advice received from iwi authorities and how the proposed management approach responds to that advice, accordance with section 32(4A)(b) of the RMA.

7 Proposed District Plan Framework

7.1 Approach to developing the Proposed Plan

Council has implemented a structured and comprehensive approach to the review of the Operative Plan and the development of the Proposed Plan that includes the following steps:

Review of the Operative Plan

This step involved consideration of the current plan, its approach and strengths/issues. In some instances, feedback was sought from internal staff and external parties to assist in understanding how the plan is being implemented in practice and meeting plan objectives.

Review of higher order statutory provisions

As indicated previously, there has been a range of changes that affect the direction and provisions of the Proposed Plan. These include:

- Legislative changes;
- A significant number of new national directions;
- The updated Northland RPS; and
- The SRMIs developed in conjunction with Northland's community.

These were reviewed to ensure that Proposed Plan provisions reflected, and as appropriate gave effect to, this statutory direction in accordance with section 75 of the Act.

Reviewed existing information and commissions technical advice

Each topic area considered the information that was available and relevant to that topic area. This includes information held by FNDC and the Northland Regional Council, reports and documents prepared by central government and a range of technical assessments. Where material gaps in the understanding of key issues were identified, specific investigations were commissioned to ensure that the Proposed Plan provisions are robust and evidence based.

The specific reports that are utilised and relied on for each topic area are referenced in the topic-specific section 32 evaluations.

Internal and external experts

Subject matter experts, both internal and external, were engaged in the preparation of the Proposed Plan sections to ensure that an appropriate level of resource and expertise was directed to ensure a robust and fit for purpose plan was developed.

Review of other District Plans

Other District Plans, particularly recent plan changes, were reviewed as relevant to a topic area to understand how they had addressed and managed certain activities or topics. This contributes to ensuring that the plan reflects 'best practice' in the context of the issues, challenges and direction of the District.

Workshops and Community Feedback

As indicated in section 5, Council undertook an extensive engagement process to engage with its community and ensure this feedback was available to plan drafters.

Style and drafting guides

The Proposed Plan provisions were prepared in accordance with a common style guide to ensure a consistent 'look and feel' of the plan.

Draft Plan, 2020/21

A draft plan was prepared and released in its e-plan format. This was then available for public and stakeholder review to help 'test' the provisions (and systems). Feedback on the provisions was collated and reviewed, and changes made to the provisions as appropriate.

7.2 How the District Plan works

7.2.1 General Approach

As indicated previously, the Proposed Plan has been prepared to give effect to the Planning Standards. The standards set out the required structure, format, spatial layers and mapping requirements for a District Plan, as well as standard definitions. The Proposed Plan is an integrated document and the relevant parts that are interrelated.

The following sets out the general approach and organisation of the plan.

Part 1 - Introduction and General Provisions

This part sets up the Proposed Plan's context and how it works. It provides definitions, abbreviations and a glossary. The chapters also provide context and process-related information in relation to tangata whenua and resource management.

Part 2 - District Wide Matters

This part sets out the strategic direction and district wide matters.

Strategic Direction – sets the high level direction for the District Plan and guidance on how best to implement the Council's community outcomes set out in its Long Term Plan.

District-Wide Matters– focus on plan methods for particular areas or activities that may occur across the district. This may be specific values, risks to be managed or factors that may require specific management, which are organised into Overlays and are spatially defined.

Part 3 - Area Specific Matters

This part is divided into three: Zones, Development Areas and Designations.

Zones – provide spatial identification and grouping of areas with common qualities, characteristics and defined environmental outcomes. The zone sets out an overall framework for land use management. All land in the district has a zone on the planning maps and has associated policies and methods including rules which are aimed at addressing zone based activities and effects. The zones generally seek to enable compatible activities that ware similar or effects to be located in appropriate areas together, while managing those that are incompatible.

Special Purpose Areas – these are areas where area-specific provisions apply.

Designations – This part contains the designations that have been included in the District Plan under section 168, section 168A or clause 4 of Schedule 1 of the RMA. Designations authorise the use of land by requiring authorities for a particular project or public work.

Part 4 - Appendices and Schedules

This part contains technical information and data, such as schedules of specific areas (Overlays managed under the District-Wide Matters chapters). Further materials such as design guides may be included.

Part 5 - Maps

Electronic planning maps spatially define zones, areas, overlays and features referred to within the District Plan chapters. Although most rules apply spatially, there are some that do not.

7.2.2 Format of Parts 2 and 3

Each of the chapters in Parts 2 and 3 follows the same format:

- **Introduction:** the introduction provides an overview of the topic covered by the chapter.
- **Objectives:** the objectives set out the outcome to be achieved for the topic. There may be a number of objectives that apply
- **Policies:** the policies set out the direction to be taken to achieve the objective. There may be a number of policies that apply.
- **Rules (if any):** the rules have the effect of regulations and set out the activity status for different activities that may be proposed.
- **Standards (if any):** rules may refer to standards that need to be complied with. There may be a number of standards that apply.

7.2.3 Classes of Activities

The activities managed by Proposed Plan reflect Council's functions under section 31 of the RMA. All of the chapters in Part 3 and most of the chapters in Part 2 contain a table of rules that establish the status of an activity. Rules will generally include conditions, requirements and standards that need to be met for that activity status to apply. If an activity is unable to comply with a particular rule condition, requirement or standard, the activity will default to a different, more stringent status.

- *Permitted activities* – are activities that can be done of right;
- The activities that need resource consent:
- *Controlled activity* – the Council must grant consent and only has the power to impose conditions in respect of matters it has reserved control over. The only exception being where a site is affected by a significant hazard or there is no access available.
- *Restricted discretionary activity* – Council may grant or refuse consent and is restricted to the matters identified in the District Plan, National Environmental Standards or other regulation;
- *Discretionary activity* – Council may grant or refuse consent and can exercise full discretion when assessing an application. This includes an assessment of the relevant provisions of the District Plan, all relevant objectives and policies and the RMA, including Part 2.
- *Non-complying activity* – Council may grant or refuse consent and can exercise full discretion when assessing an application. Non-complying activities differ from other applications as they are activities not anticipated by the District Plan. It must be determined whether the activities are contrary to the relevant objectives and policies and whether adverse effects will be no more than minor.
- *Prohibited activities* – may not be carried out and no resource consent can be applied for or granted.

7.3 Strategic Direction

This chapter sets out the overarching direction for the District Plan as expressed through Strategic Directions and associated objectives that demonstrate:

1. Commitment to, and articulation of Council's partnership with tangata whenua;
2. Alignment with Council's aspirations for the development and environmental quality of the District as expressed through Far North 2100 - an 80 year strategy for the district;
3. Integrated management through the grouping of environmental considerations which combine to achieve strategic outcomes; and avoiding strategic objectives becoming isolated within various chapters of the District Plan;

4. Achievement of particular aspects of the use, development, or protection of natural and physical resources that have been elevated to matters of national importance by the Resource Management Act and those matters of national and regional significance by National and Regional Policy Statements;
5. A prosperous economy through enabling a wide range of rural and urban business activities in the right locations;
6. The management of urban growth integrating existing and future infrastructure, providing sufficient land, or opportunity to meet growth demands for housing and business.

The provisions of the plan are intended to be considered and implemented within the over-arching context of these strategic directions.

7.3.1 Cultural prosperity

Far North communities are rich in cultural diversity. There is a strong Māori cultural identity and by 2050, over 50 per cent of the Far North population will be of Māori descent, so the significance of tikanga māori will increase. Tikanga māori guides the cultural and spiritual wellbeing of tangata whenua, enables tangata whenua to carry out kaitiaki responsibilities and obligations. Thus, ensuring the environmental wellbeing of the land and sea, while still enabling the sustainable utilisation of resources to support economic wellbeing.

The strategic objectives are:

- **SD-CP-01** - Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnerships support iwi and hapū to deliver on the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing outcomes for tangata whenua.
- **SD-CP-02** - Te ao māori, tikanga māori and tangata whenua as kaitiaki, embedded in and integral to decision making.
- **SD-CP-03** - The District's diverse cultures and communities celebrated, and cultural heritage recognised.
- **SD-CP-04** - The District's historic heritage is identified and managed to ensure its long-term protection for current and future generations.
- **SD-CP-05** - A district wide approach to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards, which includes a te ao māori decision making framework, developed with iwi and hapū.

7.3.2 Social prosperity

The aim of these strategic objectives is that Far North communities will be equal, inclusive, and socially connected. They are free from prejudice. Communities promote inter-generational equity meeting the needs of the present population, without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations.

The strategic objectives are:

- **SD-SP-01** - Community wellbeing is heightened by a sense of place.
- **SD-SP-02** - Development of initiatives that will support the wellbeing of Tangata Whenua in partnership with iwi and hapū.
- **SD-SP-03** - Encourage opportunities for fulfilment of our cultural, spiritual, environmental, and economic wellbeing.
- **SD-SP-04** - Promotion of communities and places that will meet the needs for not only our present population but future generations which are adaptive to climate change.

7.3.3 Environmental prosperity

The aim of this set of strategic objectives is for the people who make up the communities of the Far North to nurture their natural resources and ecosystems. A culture of stewardship is promoted in the community to encourage biodiversity and environmental sustainability and aims for a heightened

awareness that past practices are unsustainable. It is recognised that there is inherent social, cultural and economic value in looking after the environment.

The strategic objectives are:

- **SD-EP-01** - A culture of stewardship in the community that increases the District's biodiversity and environmental sustainability.
- **SD-EP-02** - Collaborative relationships with iwi and hapū in order to support tangata whenua to carry out their obligation and responsibility as kaitiaki.
- **SD-EP-03** - Active management of ecosystems to protect, maintain and increase indigenous biodiversity for future generations.
- **SD-EP-04** - Protection of versatile soils from inappropriate development to ensure their production potential for generations to come.
- **SD-EP-05** - Land use practices reverse climate change by enabling carbon storage and reducing carbon emissions.
- **SD-EP-06** - The natural character of the coastal environment and outstanding natural features and landscapes are managed to ensure their long-term protection for future generations.
- **SD-EP-07** - Areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna and protected for current and future generations.

7.3.4 Economic prosperity

The aim is to create a local economy that is self-sustaining, higher in per capita GDP (Gross Domestic Product) than most other rural districts and regions and is resilient to economic shock and is growing based on high income, sustainable businesses.

The strategic objectives are:

- **SD-ECP-01** - A high-earning diverse local economy which is sustainable and resilient to economic downturns, with the District's Māori economy making a significant contribution.
- **SD-ECP-02** - Existing industries and enterprises are supported and continue to prosper under volatile and changing economic conditions.
- **SD-ECP-03** - Development and retention of highly motivated, educated and skilled people in the District.
- **SD-ECP-04** - People, businesses and places are connected digitally and through integrated transport networks.
- **SD-ECP-05** - A district economy that is responsive, resilient and adaptive to the financial costs of a changing climate.

7.3.5 Urban form and development

The strategic objectives for urban form and development aim to improve efficiency and affordability for communities, seeks to contribute to the vibrancy and viability of town centres and solidifying the investment Council makes in development infrastructure.

The strategic objectives are:

- **SD-UFD-01** - The wellbeing of people who live in and visit towns in the Far North is considered first when it comes to planning places and spaces.
- **SD-UFD-02** - Urban growth and development consolidated around existing reticulated networks within town centres, supporting a more compact urban form, affordability and providing for a mix of housing typologies.
- **SD-UFD-03** - Appropriate development infrastructure in place or planned to meet the anticipated demands for housing and business activities.
- **SD-UFD-04** - Urban growth and development resilient and adaptive to the impacts from natural hazards or climate change.

7.3.6 Economic prosperity

The aim is to create a local economy that is self-sustaining, higher in per capita GDP (Gross Domestic Product) than most other rural districts and regions and is resilient to economic shock and is growing based on high income, sustainable businesses.

The strategic objectives are:

- **SD-ECP-01** - A high-earning diverse local economy, which is sustainable and resilient to economic downturns, with the District's Māori economy making a significant contribution.
- **SD-ECP-02** - Existing industries and enterprises are supported and continue to prosper under volatile and changing economic conditions.
- **SD-ECP-03** - Development and retention of highly motivated, educated and skilled people in the District.
- **SD-ECP-04** - People, businesses and places are connected digitally and through integrated transport networks.
- **SD-ECP-05** - A district economy that is responsive, resilient and adaptive to the financial costs of a changing climate.

7.3.7 Infrastructure and Energy

The aim is to create an integrated framework recognising the importance of infrastructure for economic development and community health safety and wellbeing.

The strategic objectives are:

- **SD-IE-01** - The benefits of infrastructure and renewable electricity generation activities across the district are recognised and provided for, while ensuring their adverse effects are well managed.
- **SD-IE-02** - Infrastructure and renewable electricity generation activities are protected from incompatible land use, subdivision and development that may compromise its effective operation, maintenance and upgrading.

7.3.8 Rural Environment

The aim is to recognise the long term value of our rural environment as place that supports a wide array of economic activities and has the potential to maintain this role if managed with care.

The strategic objectives are:

- **SD-RE-01** - Primary production activities are able to operate efficiently and effectively and the contribution they make to the economic and social well-being and prosperity of the district is recognised.
- **SD-RE-02** - Protection of highly productive land from inappropriate development to ensure its production potential for generations to come.

8 Methodology and Approach to Evaluation

As outlined in section 2.3, the overall section 32 evaluation for the Proposed Plan includes this overview evaluation report, which provides a context and overview to statutory framework, the Far North District and the overall plan approach. This overview section 32 evaluation report does not provide an actual evaluation of the Proposed Plan in accordance with the requirements of section 32 as this is contained in the topic-specific section 32 reports.

The topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports provide a more in-depth evaluation of the relevant topic and the associated plan provisions with the level of detail in each report corresponding to the

scale and significance of the issues being addressed. To ensure a robust and consistent approach, these topic-specific evaluations have adopted a standard format that is aligned to the requirements of section 32 of the Act and is guided by, and consistent with, best practice as outlined in the Ministry for the Environment's guide to section 32 evaluations¹¹.

The overarching purpose of section 32 of the Act is to ensure all proposed statements, standards, regulations, plans or changes are robust, evidence-based and that the proposed provisions are the most appropriate, efficient and effective means to achieve the Act's purpose. At a broad level, section 32 requires evaluation reports to:

- Examine whether the objectives in the proposal are the most appropriate to achieve the purpose of the RMA
- Examine whether the provisions are the most appropriate way to achieve the objectives through:
 - Identifying reasonably practicable options for achieving the objectives; and
 - Assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the provisions, including an assessment of environment, economic, social and cultural economic benefits and costs.

These steps are important to ensure transparent and robust decision-making and to ensure stakeholders and decision-makers can understand the rationale for the proposal. There are also requirements in section 32(4A) of the RMA to summarise advice received from iwi authorities on the proposal and the response to that advice through the provisions.

The sections below outline the methodology used for the topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports based on the standard format adopted for each evaluation report.

8.1 Evaluation of scale and significance

Section 32(1)(c) of the Act requires that evaluation reports:

'contain a level of detail that corresponds to the scale and significance of the environmental, economic, social, and cultural effects that are anticipated from the implementation of the proposal.'

Therefore, this step helps determine the level of detail required in the evaluation of objectives and provisions. The matters considered in this assessment of scale and significance for each topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports are provided in **Error! Reference source not found..** This evaluation is applied to each topic area, and the resulting conclusion on scale and significance guides the level of detail that is provided in the subsequent evaluation of the objectives and provisions. Accordingly, the topic-specific section 32 evaluations will contain different levels of detail, consistent with the scale and significance of the topic and degree of change from the Operative Plan.

Criteria	Comment	Assessment
Raises any principles of the Treaty of Waitangi		H/M/L
Degree of change from the Operative Plan		H/M/L
Effects on matters of national importance		H/M/L
Scale of effects – geographically (local, district wide, regional, national).		H/M/L
Scale of people affected – current and future generations (how many will be affected – single landowners, multiple landowners, neighbourhoods, the public generally, future generations?).		H/M/L

¹¹ Ministry for the Environment. 2017. A guide to section 32 of the Resource Management Act: Incorporating changes as a result of the Resource Legislation Amendment Act 2017. Wellington: Ministry for the Environment.

Criteria	Comment	Assessment
Scale of effects on those with specific interests, e.g., Tangata Whenua		H/M/L
Degree of policy risk – does it involve effects that have been considered implicitly or explicitly by higher order documents? Does it involve effects addressed by other standards/commonly accepted best practice?		H/M/L

The outcome from the evaluation above is combined with an assessment of the potential impacts on Māori to determine and overall indication of the scale and significance of the issue and the degree of change. As above, this then guides the level of detail provided in the subsequent evaluation of objectives, policies and rules.

8.2 Evaluation of Objectives

Section 32(1)(a) of the RMA requires that the evaluation report:

‘examine the extent to which the objectives of the proposal being evaluated are the most appropriate way to achieve the purpose of this Act’.

Consistent with the approach identified in the MfE guidance on section 32 evaluation reports, the assessment of the appropriateness of the proposed objectives was made against four criteria to test different aspects of ‘appropriateness’. This is outlined below.

Criteria	Assessment
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the objective directly related to a resource management issue? Is the objective focused on achieving the purpose of the RMA?
Usefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the objective help Council carry out its RMA functions? Does the objective provide clear direction to decision-makers?
Reasonableness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the objective be achieved without imposing unjustified high costs on Council, tangata whenua, stakeholders and the wider community?
Achievability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the objective be achieved by those responsible for implementation?

Depending on the nature of the topic and the objectives, the evaluation may be on an ‘objective by objective’ basis or alternatively, objectives may be grouped together where they are similar or there is only a minor change from those of the Operative District Plan objectives. This recognises that the objectives for a particular topic generally work together to achieve the purpose of the RMA.

8.3 Evaluation of Provisions

Section 32(1)(b) of the RMA requires the evaluation report to examine whether the provisions are the most appropriate way to achieve the objectives by:

- (i) *identifying other reasonably practicable options for achieving the objectives; and*
- (ii) *assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the provisions in achieving the objectives; and*
- (iii) *summarising the reasons for deciding on the provisions.*

When assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the provisions in achieving the objectives, section 32(2) of the RMA requires that the assessment:

- (a) *identify and assess the benefits and costs of the environmental, economic, social, and cultural effects that are anticipated from the implementation of the provisions, including the opportunities for—*

- (i) economic growth that are anticipated to be provided or reduced; and
- (ii) employment that are anticipated to be provided or reduced; and
- (b) if practicable, quantify the benefits and costs referred to in paragraph (a); and
- (c) assess the risk of acting or not acting if there is uncertain or insufficient information about the subject matter of the provisions.

This step requires an identification and assessment of reasonable alternative options and associated provisions (policies, rules and standards) for achieving the objectives in accordance with the requirements of section 32.

The topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports assess each option in terms of the benefits, costs, and effectiveness and efficiency of the provisions, along with the risks of not acting or acting when information is uncertain or insufficient. For the purposes of this assessment:

- **effectiveness** assesses how successful the provisions are likely to be in achieving the objectives and addressing the identified issues
- **efficiency** measures whether the provisions will be likely to achieve the objectives at the least cost or highest net benefit to society.

As indicated above, section 32(2)(b) requires that, where practicable, the benefits and costs (environmental, economic, social and cultural) of a proposal are quantified. The requirement to quantify benefits and costs *if practicable* recognises it is often difficult to quantify the costs and benefits of proposed provisions in practice due to the limited information that is available and the complex and multi-faceted issues. Therefore, exact quantification of the benefits and costs of the different options to achieve the objectives has generally not been undertaken for the topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports. Rather these are generally based on qualitative assessment of the environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits and costs anticipated from the provisions. Where relevant, assessments and reports that have contributed to the evidence base for the various topics and associated provisions are referenced or appended to the topic-specific section 32 evaluations as necessary.

The evaluation approach that has been adopted for the evaluation of options in each topic-specific report is provided in **Error! Reference source not found..** This is populated for each option and an overall evaluation is provided. As indicated previously, the degree of detail that is provided in the evaluation of options is commensurate to the scale and significance of the issue as determined by the assessment.

Option 1 –		
Benefits	Costs	Risk of acting / not acting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Economic growth and employment opportunities</u> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<u>Effectiveness</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<u>Efficiency</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
<u>Quantification</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		
<u>Overall evaluation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

9 Summary

9.1 District Plan Review

Council is required by the Act to have a district plan in place for the District and to review the district plan at least every ten years. The Operative District Plan was made operative on 14 September 2009. Since that time, it has been subject to some 22 plan changes and a range of minor changes, including in response to national direction.

In order to ensure that the district plan is fit for purpose and help manage the natural and physical resources of the Far North into the future, Council has undertaken a comprehensive and robust review of the district plan, as outlined in the report above. This has included significant engagement with the community, tangata whenua and stakeholders over approximately five years to identify the significant issues facing the District and how to manage these issues to achieve the social, cultural, environmental and economic prosperity of the community and its future development.

This work has culminated in the development and notification of the Proposed Plan, which is the subject of this overview section 32 report and the topic-specific evaluations undertaken in accordance with section 32 of the RMA.

9.2 Section 32 Evaluation Reports

Section 32 of the Act requires an evaluation report to be prepared to support the Proposed Plan. This evaluation documents the process by which plan provisions are developed and ensures that this process follows a systematic approach to identifying issues, establishing objectives and policies and selecting and implementing methods (including rules) to achieve the objectives.

The evaluation assists to demonstrate that:

- The objectives, policies and methods the Proposed Plan have been well considered and tested against the purpose of the RMA;
- The provisions in the Proposed Plan are an effective and efficient way to achieve the purpose of the RMA and plan objectives; and
- The anticipated benefits of introducing new regulation outweigh the anticipated costs and risks.

The evaluation reports aim to communicate the thinking behind the provisions to the community and decision-makers. They tell the 'story' of what is proposed and the reasoning behind it. The evaluation also provides a record for future reference of the process, including the methods, technical studies, and consultation that underpin the plan change / policy process, including the assumptions and risks.

All district plans cover a range of issues and content – from 'big picture' strategic issues through to detailed provisions and rules. These need to be evaluated under section 32 of the RMA with the level of detail in the evaluation corresponding to the scale and significance of the issue and change to the current approach and other matters. Much of the strategic context is common across the district and the range of matters addressed in detail in the Proposed Plan. Accordingly, Council has undertaken its section 32 evaluation on two levels to help make these evaluations more accessible and minimise repetition of common content.

- Overview section 32 report (this report) – provides the statutory context, direction and key issues, documents the engagement that has been undertaken and provided an overview to the Proposed Plan and the evaluation approach.
- Topic-specific section 32 evaluation reports – these are focussed on the relevant subject/topic and provide a detailed discussion and evaluation of the relevant objectives, policies, rules and methods in accordance with the requirements of section 32 of the Act.

Together these documents provide a comprehensive evaluation of the Proposed Plan and its objectives and associated provisions in accordance with statutory requirements and national guidance.

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 Northland Regional Policy Statement – Issues and Objectives

10.2 Appendix 2 – List of Relevant Legislation

10.3 Appendix 3 – Summary of Operative District Plan History

10.4 Appendix 4 – Section 35 Efficiency and Effectiveness Review (2020)

10.5 Appendix 5 – Summary of ‘Put a Pin on it’ (2016)

10.6 Appendix 6 – Summary of Feedback on the Draft District Plan (2019)

10.7 Appendix 7 - Summary of Evaluation of s.31 Plan Enabled Housing Supply

10.8 Appendix 8 - Far North District Population Projections, prepared by Infometrics, May 2022