

Resource Consents

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What we do

This activity processes resource consents in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) and the District Plan including:

- providing information and advice to applicants, developers and other interested members of the community on the resource consent process and the District Plan rules
- deciding whether to process resource consent applications on a notified or non-notified basis
- assessing the potential effects on the environment of the activity proposed in the consent application
- seeking further information from the applicant where needed to assess effects
- seeking information from other sections of Council and other parties to help assess the effects of the proposed activity
- imposing conditions on resource consents to mitigate adverse effects on the environment of the proposed activity
- preparing resource consent reports on the proposed activity for Hearings Committee, Independent Commissioners, the Environment Court or others determined under delegation
- managing the appeal and mediation process on matters before the Environment Court.

The statutory processing time for non-notified consents is 20 working days. This timeline may vary due to requests for more information from the applicant, time to work through any pre-hearing process, or waiting for written approvals for the non-notification of applications.

This activity also monitors the implementation of resource consent conditions. This requires coordinating technical staff and scheduling site visits to check that activities are undertaken in accordance with consent conditions. Compliance with conditions should achieve anticipated environmental results. Equally, Plan rules are enforced

to prevent inappropriate development that may adversely affect the environment.

Why we do it

To protect and enhance the quality of the district's natural and physical environment now and into the future.

This activity contributes to the following Council Outcomes

- Tairāwhiti Taonga
- Tairāwhiti Tangata

Challenges and Opportunities

The Government is considering changes to the RMA including attention to issues in plans and consenting arrangements to address cost of delays and timeliness. This may result in tighter consent timeframes.

In 2013/14 85% of resource consents applications were processed by Council within statutory timeframes. This compares to the national average of 97% achieved by councils across the country. Council will take steps to improve consent processing times.

A key challenge is to ensure that all the information needed to enable efficient processing of consents is provided by the applicant when submitting their application.

Many resource consents require input from other parts of Council and better systems and processes are required to ensure that priority District Plan related issues are responded to in a timely manner.

Other opportunities include:

- making better use of technology, for example online consent applications
- improving customer information – with good, easy to understand guidance on what to do and when, utilising brochures, YouTube and websites
- stronger guidance at the “front of counter” when accepting resource consents – and ensuring that all consents have adequate information for processing
- improving customer access to plans including mapping, GIS and 'E-plans'
- identifying thresholds for enabling fast tracking consenting
- appointing a regional compliance officer dedicated across regional and district roles
- compiling Council's contaminated site data to streamline the National Environmental Standard for assessing and managing contaminants in soil

Periods with low consent numbers may be an opportune time for change, innovation and future proofing to cope with increased workload and any changes to the RMA.

There are challenges related to:

- managing multiple large scale, complex and novel activity applications with high information needs within tight timeframes

- in some cases public dislike of environmental regulation and negative media may impact on public perception of proposed activities
- unexpected compliance issues.

What are our plans for the next ten years?

What have we been doing?	What will we do in years 1-10?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have enhanced public information by making more information available on the resource consent process. • Continued to develop the recently established Monitoring and Compliance approach to effectively monitor compliance with resource consent conditions and respond to breaches of plan rules. • Implemented Council Enforcement Policy and Guidelines including developed Council's enforcement database to improve service and provide accurate reporting on enforcement matters. 	<p>Years 1-3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on improving resource consent processing timeframes including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Develop clear checklists and guidance material for resource consent applicants to ensure all information necessary is provided up front. ◦ Promote pre-application meetings as a way to ensure applicants provide the information needed to process more complex consents. ◦ Investigate a fast track process for straight-forward consent applications. ◦ Review the structure of the team, skills and expertise needed to expedite applications. ◦ Optimise the process for inputs from parts of Council to ensure timeliness of information. • Provide input into the Combined Regional Land & District Plan that may help remove the need for a resource consent where there will be no additional impacts on the anticipated environmental outcomes. • Develop contaminated/non-contaminated land register as per the requirements of the National Environmental Standard. • Promote the working relationship between the iwi of the region and Council consenting staff. <p>Years 1-10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process resource consents in accordance with the RMA 1991 and the District Plan. • Provide input into RMA Plan reviews to ensure that measures included are practical in implementation and able to be efficiently processed. • Develop and disseminate communications and information material around the RMA Plans and resource consent requirements.
<p>We will achieve these plans by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More proactively managing the resource consent process to ensure a good standard of application. • Monitoring and responding to legislative changes such as the RMA Reforms. • Taking greater advantage of technology as a way of making consent processing more efficient and transparent. • Developing a forum for consulting with iwi and improving their input into resource consents. • Continuing to upskill staff and work across Council to ensure appropriate technical input to consents. 	

Levels of Service and Performance Measures

Level of Service	Performance measure	Results 2013/14	Target Years 1-3	Target Years 4-10
We promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources through processing and monitoring resource consent applications.	Percentage of confirmed non-compliance with Plan rules rectified or subject to enforcement action within three months.	100%	100%	100%
	Percentage of consents due for monitoring completed.	Amended Measure	60% - 70%	75%
	Percentage of consents that meet good practice standards as set out in Quality Planning when audited.	New measure	Year 1: Establish baseline and targets	Target to be established
	Percentage of Resource Consents applications processed within statutory timeframes.	85%	Year 1: 95% Year 2: 96% Year 3: 97%	98%
	Percentage of resource consents with full compliance or minor non-compliance at first monitoring inspection.	New measure	10 - 30%	30% - 75%

Forecast Activity Cost Statement

OPERATING REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE (\$000)	Budget 2015/16	Budget 2016/17	Budget 2017/18	Budget 2018/19	Budget 2019/20	Budget 2020/21	Budget 2021/22	Budget 2022/23	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2024/25
Operating Non Exchange Revenue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operating Exchange Revenue	192	197	202	207	214	220	227	234	242	251
Operating Expenditure	1,075	1,148	1,141	1,184	1,223	1,234	1,251	1,339	1,314	1,442
Net Cost of Service	883	951	939	977	1,009	1,014	1,024	1,105	1,072	1,191

There are no capital projects for this Activity