



District Development Committee Agenda

Wednesday 09 September 2026, 1.00pm

The meeting will be held at the Manawatū District Council,
135 Manchester Street, Feilding, and a video recording
made available on

www.mdc.govt.nz

MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson

Councillor Colin Dyer

Deputy Chairperson

Councillor Raewyn Loader

Members

Councillor Bridget Bell
Councillor Sam Hill
Councillor Alison Short
Mayor Michael Ford

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The District Development Committee is established to support the Manawatu District Council's strategic direction in fostering sustainable growth, community wellbeing, and economic vitality across the Manawātū District. The Committee provides focused governance oversight of district planning, land use, and development matters, ensuring these activities advance the outcomes and priorities set out in the Long-Term Plan and other key strategic frameworks.

The Committee operates under delegated authority from the Council and provides recommendations on matters of district development policy, strategy, and implementation that have significant community, economic, or social implications. It also serves as a key interface between planning, economic, and community development functions to ensure coordinated and future-focused decision-making that enhances the liveability and prosperity of the district.

Purpose

The purpose of the District Development Committee is to guide and oversee the planning and development of the district in a manner that promotes sustainable growth, vibrant communities, and a resilient local economy. The Committee ensures that development initiatives, planning frameworks, and related policy work align with Council's strategic objectives, legislative requirements, and community aspirations.

Through its oversight and recommendations, the Committee supports informed Council decision-making that balances growth with community wellbeing, inclusion, and the creation of thriving places where people and businesses can succeed.

Responsibilities

1. Consider the impact of the Government's Resource Management Act (RMA) reforms. Make recommendations to Council for consideration and / or approval, noting any strategic risks.
2. Consider the districts Growth Framework, associated village plans, and other related planning work such as the Housing Capacity Model. Make recommendations to Council for consideration and / or approval, noting any strategic risks.
3. Receive the progress reports on the District Plan programme of work, and escalate any strategic risks and make recommendations to Council for approval as required.

4. Approve the initiatives to be delivered for the Feilding Town Centre Refresh project that was approved by Council in the 2024-2034 Long-term Plan.
5. Consider potential economic development opportunities (outside of those delivered by the Central Economic Development Agency or Feilding and District Promotions). Make recommendations to Council for consideration and / or approval, noting any strategic risks.
6. Consider potential community development opportunities (outside of those delivered by Council levels of service or Council grant funded services). Make recommendations to Council for consideration and / or approval, noting any strategic risks.

Quorum

Three members of the committee.

Meeting Cycle

Meetings held 2-monthly on the second Wednesday of the month at 8.30 am.



Shayne Harris
Chief Executive

ORDER OF BUSINESS

PAGE

1. MEETING OPENING

2. APOLOGIES

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

6

Recommendation

That the minutes of the District Development Committee meeting held 11 February 2026 be adopted as a true and correct record.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Notification from elected members of:

- 4.1 Any interests that may create a conflict with their role as an elected member relating to the items of business for this meeting; and
- 4.2 Any interests in items in which they have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest as provided for in the Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968

5. PUBLIC FORUM

There are no public forum items scheduled for this meeting.

6. PRESENTATIONS

There are no external presentations scheduled for this meeting.

7. NOTIFICATION OF LATE ITEMS

Where an item is not on the agenda for a meeting, that item may be dealt with at that meeting if:

- 7.1 The District Development Committee by resolution so decides; and
- 7.2 The Chairperson explains at the meeting at a time when it is open to the public the reason why the item is not on the agenda, and the reason why the discussion of the item cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting.

8. OFFICER PRESENTATIONS**8.1 PLANNING REFORMS - PLANNING ACT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ACT UPDATE**

11

Presentation by Richard Hills and Matthew Mackay.

8.2 SPATIAL PLANNING INTERIM SECRETARIAT ROLE UPDATE

35

Presentation by Richard Hills and Matthew Mackay.

9. OFFICER REPORTS

There are no Officer Reports scheduled for this meeting.

10. CONSIDERATION OF LATE ITEMS**11. PUBLIC EXCLUDED BUSINESS****RECOMMENDATION**

That the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

1. Summary Report - Proposed Plan Change E Update

That the general subject of each matter to be considered while the public is excluded, the reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter, and the specific grounds under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 for the passing of this resolution are as follows:

General subject of each matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Grounds under Section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
12.1 Summary Report - Proposed Plan Change E Update	s7(2)(i) s7(2)(g) <i>Maintaining legal professional privilege, and enabling MDC to continue with negotiations</i>	s48(1)(a)

This resolution is made in reliance on Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interests protected by Section 6 or Section 7 of the Act which would be prejudiced by the holding of the whole or the relevant part of the proceedings of the meeting in public as specified above.

14. MEETING CLOSURE

MEETING MINUTES	
DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	TIME
WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026	8:30 AM

Minutes of a meeting of the District Development Committee held on Wednesday 11 February 2026, which commenced at 8.30 am at the Manawātū District Council, 135 Manchester Street, Feilding.

PRESENT: Councillor Colin Dyer Chairperson
Mayor Michael Ford
Councillor Sam Hill
Councillor Raewyn Loader
Councillor Alison Short

APOLOGIES: Councillor Bridget Bell

IN ATTENDANCE: Frances Smorti Active Chief Executive
Hamish Waugh General Manager – Infrastructure
Steph Skinner Governance and Strategy Officer
Matthew Mackay Principal Policy Planner
Star Wilson-Jennings Policy Planner
Richard Hills Senior Policy Planner
Daniel Batley Senior Consultant Planner, Evergreen Consulting

DDC 25-28/001

MEETING OPENING

Chairperson Colin Dyer opened the meeting.

DDC 25-28/002

APOLOGIES

RESOLVED

That the apology from Councillor Bridget Bell be approved.

That an apology for lateness be approved for Mayor Michael Ford.

Moved by: Cr Raewyn Loader

Seconded by: Cr Alison Short

CARRIED (4-0)

DDC 25-28/003

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

There are no previous minutes to confirm.

DDC 25-28/004

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

MEETING MINUTES	
DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	TIME
WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026	8:30 AM

DDC 25-28/005

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no requests for public forum for this meeting.

DDC 25-28/006

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations scheduled for this meeting.

DDC 25-28/007

NOTIFICATION OF LATE ITEMS

There were no late items of business notified for consideration.

DDC 25-28/008

PRESENTATION – PLANNING REFORMS

Matthew Mackay, Principal Policy Planner, Star Wilson-Jennings, Policy Planner and Richard Hills, Senior Policy Planner provided an update to the Committee on the government's planning reforms.

- There were concerns about staff pressures with all the changes, submissions on behalf of council, and business as usual.
- Both the Manawātū District Council and Joint Regional submissions include concerns on the proposed time-frames, and these were explained.
- It was asked if there was any clarity around how 'no net-loss of biodiversity' is to be monitored and enforced, unfortunately officers do not have any information around this currently.

RESOLVED

That the District Development Committee acknowledge receipt of the presentation Update on Planning Reforms 11 February 2026 for information.

MOVED: Cr Raewyn Loader

SECONDED: Cr Sam Hill

CARRIED (4-0)

MEETING MINUTES	
DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	TIME
WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026	8:30 AM

DDC 25-28/009

PRESENTATION – GROWTH FRAMEWORK

Matthew Mackay, Principal Policy Planner, Star Wilson-Jennings, Policy Planner and Richard Hills, Senior Policy Planner and Daniel Batley, Evergreen Consulting provided an update to the Committee on the Growth Framework.

- It was asked if a regional spatial plan would give us more clarity going forward. The team will schedule a future workshop session specifically on spatial planning and the role of the elected members in the new system.
- There have been several meetings regarding Papakāinga developments in our district.
- Is there anything being done to protect ruralism and the culture of our villages. Each is slightly different – typography – stormwater considerations – lifestyle etc. Where we are is a starting point for what is next – working with the community.
- Complete the development of village and settlement growth plans ("mini blueprints") for seven villages, including stakeholder engagement, preparing for future phased implementation as growth pressures arise.
- Review and update the feasibility of precincts 1 to 3 in Fielding, including assessment of servicing constraints and potential for future development.
- Updated Councils view on growth areas for 1 to 3 soil types.
- Forecasting industrial land capacity and growth, what is happening in Palmerston North affects Manawātū. Progress the commissioning of the industrial and commercial land demand study, including coordination with CEDA and local stakeholders, with RFP responses due Friday 13 February.

RESOLVED

That the District Development Committee acknowledge receipt of the presentation Update on Growth Framework 11 February 2026 for information.

MOVED: Cr Raewyn Loader

SECONDED: Cr Sam Hill

CARRIED (4-0)

MEETING MINUTES	
DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	TIME
WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026	8:30 AM

The meeting adjourned at 10.00am and resumed at 10.16am.

DDC 25-28/010

PRESENTATION – PLANNING FUNCTION OVERVIEW AND RMA UPDATE

Matthew Mackay, Principal Policy Planner, Star Wilson-Jennings, Policy Planner and Richard Hills, Senior Policy Planner provided an update to the Committee on the Planning Function Overview and RMA update.

Mayor Michael Ford joined the meeting at 10.36am.

- Granny flats - residents encouraged to come and talk to council first before putting plans in place to ensure these meet the standards. Monitor inquiries and applications for granny flats/family flats and collect data to inform future housing capacity modelling and policy updates.
- It seems likely there will be a need to update the Development Contributions (DC) Policy to address the new types of development enabled by the NES for Detached Minor Residential Units (granny flats/family flats), including consideration of tiny homes and duplexes. The government is also looking at this as part of changes to development levies under the Local Government Act.
- The RMA in current its form is failing us. It does not speak to a level of detail we require. Matthew Mackay – how do we standardise all this information and there are gaps in the flood map models.
- Continue to monitor and participate in the Horizons Regional Council mapping project for highly productive land and engage as mapping work progresses to ensure Council input is included.

RESOLVED

That the District Development Committee acknowledge receipt of the presentation Update on Planning Function Overview and RMA Update 11 February 2026 for information.

MOVED: Cr Raewyn Loader

SECONDED: Cr Sam Hill

CARRIED (5-0)

DDC 25-28/011

CONSIDERATION OF LATE ITEMS

There were no late items notified for consideration.

MEETING MINUTES	
DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	TIME
WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026	8:30 AM

DDC 25-28/012

PUBLIC EXCLUDED BUSINESS

There were no public excluded items for consideration.

DDC 25-28/013

MEETING CLOSURE

The meeting was declared closed at 11.22am.

Meeting Video

<https://www.DDC.govt.nz/about-council/meetings-agendas-and-minutes/videos-of-council-and-committee-meetings/manawatu-district-council-meeting-videos>

Planning Bill & Natural Environment Bill

Update and implications

Richard Hills

Senior Policy Planner

Matthew Mackay

Principal Policy Planner



Overview



1. Status and Passage of Legislation
2. Recap of key changes
3. The order in which we will see the first key changes implemented (+ high level implications)
4. Possible legislative amendments if the Government were to change
5. National Policy Direction Approach – Discussion Document

Section one: Status & Passage

- Committee of the Whole Stage (no further changes after this) – **Completed 26 & 27 August 2026**
- Third Reading – **week of 14 September 2026** (House currently in recess - next Parliament sitting day is the 15th)
- Royal Assent - **week of 21 September 2026?** (pre-election adjournment of Housing sitting expected on the 24th)

Staging of provisions coming into force

- **Day after Royal Assent** - over half of the Acts come into force: E.g. various introductory provisions, roles, national instruments, spatial planning, statutory acknowledgements, delegations, emergency response regulation powers, and Ministerial intervention powers etc.
- **One month after Assent** – various changes to RMA and Fast Track Act consenting considerations.
- **By Order-in-Council** – **RMA repeal**, Planning Tribunal (for RMA), consents/ permits, enforcement, changes to water conservation orders and Wildlife Act approvals, emergency works and changes relating freshwater farm plans
- **Within four years** – A ‘catch all’ for anything not yet in force by that time.

Section Two

Recap of Key Changes

Intended effect of the reforms

“To deliver a modern planning system that lifts growth, productivity and living standards” (Hon. Chris Bishop)

- **Stronger top-down direction** with less investigation having to be done by consent applicants (‘funnel approach’)
- **Fewer, faster council plans and greater standardization** of provisions to reduce complexity
 - ~100 plans to become 17*
- **Reduce the number of consents required** by up to 45% and making consenting simpler and cheaper
- **Narrow what councils can regulate** – to better recognize property rights and concentrate on effects that matter
- **Compensate owners** where planning controls significantly affect the reasonable use of land
- **Focus participation to where it matters** - clarity about who must be consulted and when, including with iwi
- **A proportionate regulatory approach** – including using voluntary or farmer-led tools wherever possible

New System v RMA

New System	RMA
Two Acts – with separate purposes (a combined 1,062 pages) • Planning Act - <i>The enjoyment of land [Use & Development]</i> • Natural Environment Act - <i>Use and protection of natural resources</i>	A single act with a single unified purpose (1,007 pages) <i>Promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.</i>
Two separate sets of goals with no legislative hierarchy • Planning Act - ‘enjoyment of land’, urban and infrastructure, with some protections & providing for Māori interests • Natural Environment Act - use and development of natural resources, protecting heath, natural hazard risks, and providing for Māori interests	A hierarchy of matters of ‘national importance’ and ‘other matters’: • <i>National importance</i>: a natural environment, cultural and hazard risk emphasis • <i>Other matters</i>: a stewardship, efficient use of resources & energy, climate change effects, amenity and environmental quality emphasis
Te Tiriti o Waitangi A descriptive section which sets out the various mechanisms in the two Acts which through which the Crown’s responsibilities under the Treaty will be carried out	A requirement for everyone exercising functions and powers to take into account the <i>principles</i> of the Treaty

New System v RMA... 2

New System	RMA
An explicit ‘top down’ funnel approach with central government playing a more active role in local policy and plans: • Determining how goals are to be interpreted and prioritized • A more directive policy setting role in directing plan content (including standardized zones) and environmental limits • Greater participation in local government plan making (including Ministerial appointments) and stronger Ministerial monitoring & intervention powers	Originally a council / community-led approach guided by some government direction with: • The government able to set national policy direction and standards – but this evolved (since 2015) to greater allow government direction (including plan format). • Ministerial appointments / direct participation / intervention only in bespoke circumstances.
Mandatory Regional Spatial Plans – as part of ‘combined plans’ with a strong emphasis on setting the strategic direction for urban growth, change and infrastructure (+ constraints)	• No provision for Regional Spatial Plans (but could be voluntary + Regional Policy Statements had some role).
• Natural Environment Plans - Regional Council plans for managing use and protection of natural resources. • Land Use Plans – Territorial Authority land use and development management plans	• Regional Plans - Regional Council plans for managing use and protection of natural resources. • District Plans – Territorial Authority land use and development management plans

New System v RMA... 3

New System	RMA
Participation agreements initiated by iwi (subject to regulations on content and process & Ministerial monitoring).	Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreements can be initiated by iwi – these are not subject to regulations or Ministerial checks.
Narrowed range of effects and participation rights • Cannot consider effects on external and internal layouts of buildings and sites, trade competition, retail distribution, and building character & appearance, private views, climate change, or effects on non-outstanding landscapes. • Submissions limited to ‘qualifying persons’ (those who live in, own property in, or are located in, the district / region). • No merits-based appeals on standardized plan provisions.	Broad range of effects and participation rights: • [In theory] Includes almost any environmental effect or impact on amenity, but excludes effects on climate change and trade competition. • Any person can make a submission (but further submissions on plan changes limited) • Appeals on plan provisions can be merit-based and challenges to processes used are allowed.
Regulatory relief - • Compensation to landowners if a <i>specified rule</i> has a significant adverse impact on the reasonable use of land. NB – also a person may apply to the Environment Court to have a plan provision deleted or modified.	No compensation payable, but landowners may apply to the Environment Court to have plan provisions deleted or modified.

Section Three

Order of the first key Changes

Immediate

Provisions	Implications
Definitions, Purpose and Goals of the Planning Act and Natural Environment Act	• Important context for what the new government regulations, regional spatial plans, and land use plans need to achieve. • Has little impact on resource consents for now
Planning Act s14 - Effects outside scope of Act	• Planning Act plans cannot consider appearance & character of buildings, layout, lack of demand or viability, views, effects on non-outstanding landscapes, precedent effects, and residents. • No impact on consents until the new plans are in place. - <i>But see changes to RMA s104</i>
Provisions of key instruments, and Part 3 Combined Plans (& Schedule 2) - Regional Spatial Plan (RSP) - Land use plans (and Natural Environment Plan – in the case of Horizons)	• Provides the mandate, process requirements and mandatory content for Regional Spatial Plans and Land Use Plans. - <i>Region requires new RSP Committee and Secretariat (\$\$, members, staff contributions / time) – MDC will need to decide who our rep(s) will be</i> • ‘Statutory Clock’ on RSP preparation and notification starts

Immediate... 2

Provisions	Implications
Functions of central and local government etc. <i>(Planning Act Part 5)</i>	Important to statutory mandate / requirements for preparing plans and providing for government, setting standards, limits, regulations and participating in local government planning
Regulatory Relief <i>(Planning Act Schedule 3 Part 4)</i>	No immediate compensation – only applies to rules in new LU and NE plans Council will need to prepare a framework – including the circumstances when regulatory relief is to apply and what forms and quantum of relief should be provided. This can be appealed. <i>- \$\$ and time to prepare (possible impact on LTP etc)</i>
Designations under the Planning Act <i>(Planning Act, Schedule 5)</i>	- Relevant to preparing Regional Spatial Plans and Land use Plans – Designations can be incorporated into Regional Spatial Plans - Does not relate to District Plans under the RMA. - Does not affect designations under Manawatū District Plan Change DES (but these can be carried into the new plans)

Immediate... 3

Provisions	Implications
Ministerial powers to make regulations (including emergency response regulations) <i>(Planning Act ss279 - 283)</i>	• Allows the Minister to make regulations on matters such as: - Conduct of hearings (e.g. for Regional Spatial Plans) - Standards and methods for digital technology - Deeming the status of activities in Land Use Plans - Prescribing the content of documents
Transitional Provisions – various provisions about what stops and continues the day after Royal Assent	• Consent applications lodged before <u>one month after Assent</u> continue to be processed as though the RMA was not amended • Applications not yet determined before <u>one month after Assent</u> continue through to a decision as though the RMA was not amended

Within one month

Provisions	Implications
Initial National Standards & Rules	• Allows Ministers to have interim national standards and rules under the Planning Act – and use existing NESs as interim standards • Can override District Plan Rules to increase or reduce requirements
Ability to change existing plans to remove provisions relating to certain effects <i>(New RMA s76A)</i>	• Councils (including MDC) can delete plan content relating to some building design features, internal layout, unit size and outdoor space without public consultation or process • Affects Operational DP - MDC to decide when best to do this
Interim Changes to RMA ss92, 104 + new 104AA • Consent applications and designations– some effect considerations narrowed. • A new ‘deemed permitted activity pathway’ where effects related to those out of scope	• No longer able to consider some external features of building, internal layout & unit size and outdoor space in relation to consents and designations. • MDC can deem some otherwise ‘consentable’ activities as ‘permitted’ (no consent needed) • Should reduce MDC consent numbers – but probably not by 45%

Within one month... 2

Provisions	Implications
Changes to the Fast Track Approvals Act - interim RMA s104A to apply <i>(Planning Act, Schedule 11, Part 2A)</i>	• Consent applications and designations: some environmental effect considerations narrowed (internal fit out, outlook space, landscaped areas, retail distribution, demand, and views from private property cannot be considered). • May impact on how effects are managed in relation to the Bunnythorpe Solar Farm Application – but not significantly.

Section Four

What if the government changes?

(NB: No outright repeals are proposed)

PLANNING ACT (35 Amendment Papers total)

- Substitution of the purpose clause with a more directive and informative purpose -
 - *Enable development, high-quality infrastructure and primary-sector growth within environmental protections*
- A revised set of goals – but still based around enabling use of land and resources, urban development, infrastructure provision etc.
- Reinstatement of an RMA-like *Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles* clause ('must give effect to principles...')
- [Reducing or mitigating] Greenhouse gasses and 'Polluter Pays' are relevant planning considerations

PLANNING ACT Cont.

- Regional spatial plans must promote integrated management of natural & physical resources including water source protection areas, environmental enhancement area, and green networks
- National Instruments – revised preparation process
 - Reinstatement of a Board of Inquiry Process (with specific expertise) including submissions
 - More detailed Ministerial evaluation requirements (appropriateness, efficiency etc.)
 - Explicit requirement to consult local government sector representatives and iwi
- Repeal (or significant restriction on the scope) of Regulatory Relief provisions

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ACT (46 Amendment Papers total)

- Revised purpose:
 - *To maintain and improve the natural environment and safeguard human health, provide for climate change adaptation, manage natural hazard risk and inform planning under the Planning Act*
- Replacement set of goals based around the purpose as well as:
 - Protect and restore ecological integrity
 - Maintaining indigenous biodiversity (replacing 'no net loss')
 - Protecting human health from harm
 - Recognising and providing for relationship of iwi and hapu with land, water, sites etc.
- Polluter pays principle, greenhouse gasses and CC Response Act plans become valid planning considerations
- RMA –style Principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi clause (give effect to principles of...)

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ACT cont.

- A ‘National Instrument Board’ for making national standards and instruments –
 - Minister can only recommend these to the Governor General and not make separate sets
- Strengthening the effect of Environmental Limits protecting health so the Minister cannot override them
- Permitting the use of market-based resource allocation mechanism (e.g. auctions and tenders)
- Regional spatial plans and natural environment plans must help implement GHG emission reduction plans

Section Five

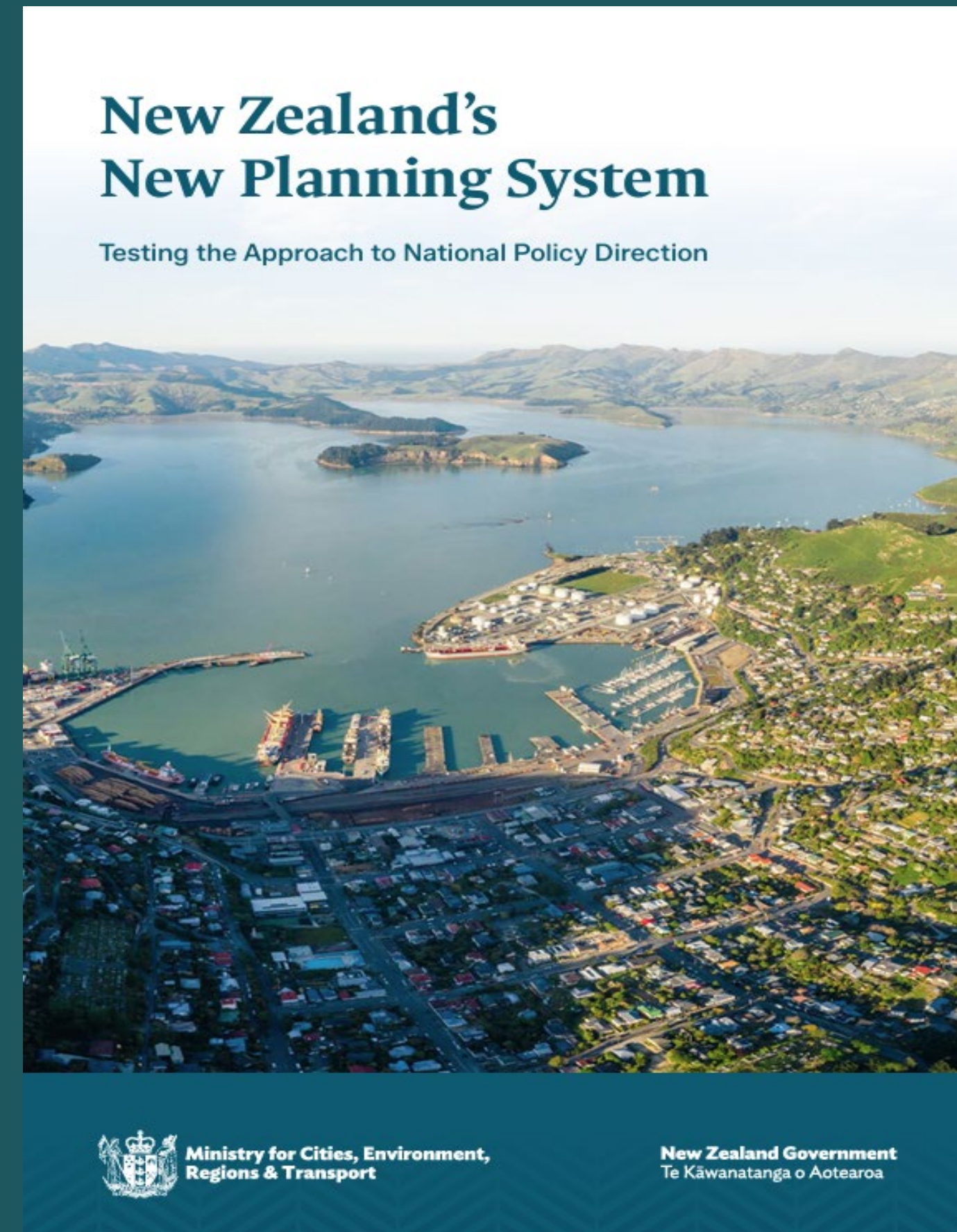
National Policy Direction

Where National Policy Direction (NPD) fits in the new system



Illustrative National Policy Direction (NPD)

- To test how the new NPD could work
 - **NOT THE FINAL WORDING**
 - Formal consultation sometime in 2027
- 92-page discussion document
 - Takes the **15 goals** across the Planning Act and Natural Environment Act and proposes:
 - **~104 mandatory 'directives'**
 - Grouped into 1 set of cross-cutting directives , 5 'Themes' and 2 System-wide Topic Areas and 22 'Sub-themes'
 - MCERT wants feedback by 16 October 2026
 - Council submission via Submissions Panel?



Initial Observations on the Illustrative NPD

- The NPD will be extremely influential – only the goals in the Planning Act and Natural Environment Act trump it
- Current themes reflect the priorities of the Government today – what happens if the Government / priorities change?
 - Housing and development
 - Infrastructure
 - Primary Production (includes reference to protection of ‘high value growing areas’)
 - Resources and Quarrying
 - Public Values (a miscellaneous assortment of public access, biodiversity, historic heritage and human health matters)
- Natural environment (air, water etc.) and resource directions feature as sub-themes to the above (if mentioned at all)
- Many directives appear reliant on *definitions, national standards, exemptions, and even ‘evidential requirements’* which we have yet to see or have an ability to comment on.
- A key role of the NPD is to resolve conflicts between goals etc. – but some of the directive wording is subjective
- Minister has 12 months to finalize the NPD - but our regional spatial plan development process starts now



Questions on our new planning future?

Summary Paper



Regional Spatial Planning Interim Secretariat Update

Purpose

For information. To provide members with an overview on requirements and progress relating to the Manawātū-Whanganui Regional Spatial Plan, including the role of the Interim Secretariat.

Context

Government will shortly enact the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act 2026 as part of the Government's new resource management system.

A key feature of the new system is regional spatial planning, the purpose of which is to set the strategic direction for growth and change in each region for the next 30 years

Regions (including their constituent territorial authorities) have 21 months from enactment to develop and notify a spatial plan.

The spatial plan development process will be governed by a Spatial Planning Committee (SPC) constituted in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act (LGA 2002) and the Planning Act 2026. The requirements of the latter include:

- Each council in the region being entitled to appoint at least one member.
- The councils of the region must ensure that at least one member has skills and experience related to te ao Māori and Māori development.
- The Minister may also choose one or more appointees.

The SPC will be supported by a secretariat appointed by the committee and charged with providing the committee with technical and administrative support. Councils in the region need to consider how this secretariat is to be resourced.

Before the SPC and secretariat is appointed, all the councils of the region need to have a 'process agreement' in place. The process agreement must set out how councils will work together (and with the committee), outline decision-making process, responsibilities of each council, consultation requirements, how the secretariat will be established and the process for each local authority to engage with iwi.

The period up to the adoption of the process agreement and appointment of the SPC and secretariat has required an interim governance structure and an interim secretariat to be put in place. Mr. Nicholas Peet (former Chief Executive of Hawkes Bay Regional Council) has been contracted in as Project Director to assist. Law firm Cooper Rapley is supporting with legal advice.

Key Considerations

Status, interim arrangements and role of the Interim Secretariat

The Mayoral Forum and Chief Executives of the local authorities in the region have established a collaborative project to prepare the region for spatial planning.

The region has started preparation for regional spatial planning. Broadly, there are three phases of work ahead, with the Interim Secretariat already working on the first.

1. An **establishment phase** August – November 2026
2. A **delivery phase** December 2026 – June 2028
3. A **hearings and adoption phase** July 2028 – March 2029

The key deliverables (led by the Interim Secretariat) for the establishment phase are:

1. A regional SPC being established.
2. Filling remaining gaps in Interim Secretariat in capability to support establishment.
3. Plans for a formal secretariat to be in place to be considered by the SPC (once formed).
4. A process agreement agreed by councils (and published).
5. A project plan for the delivery phase finalized (including resourcing implications).
6. An engagement process / approach with iwi / Māori identified.
7. A stock take of available data and information held by councils and gaps completed to form the basis of a 'foundations report' to the SPC.

Impacts

Council financial and resourcing impacts

All councils have provided an initial \$20,000 per territorial authority and \$100,000 through Horizons Regional Council for the spatial planning process.

Costs of staff time lie where they fall during the establishment phase. For Manawātū District Council the Chief Executive and the Policy Planning Team have been the primary contributors, leading both the Chief Executives Group and the Regional Policy Planning Leads (RPPL) Group through the early stages of the establishment phase.

The final cost of the spatial plan process will be considerably more than the initial budget above. The potential costs will be identified through a project plan to be completed through the establishment phase. Initial budget provision will likely have to be made in advance of councils' Long Term Plan decisions.

Impacts on other stakeholders

A critical part of the development of the RSP will be engaging with iwi / Māori. Local authorities will need to consider the views of iwi / Māori, existing working relationships and structures, Treaty settlement legislation, the requirements of the Planning Act.

The Planning Act also requires engagement with infrastructure providers, government Ministers whose portfolios may be affected, representatives of the development sector and representatives of the wider community (as determined by the process agreement) before a draft regional plan is notified.

Potential approaches to engagement will be developed and provided as advice and feedback sought from councils through the project establishment phase.

Questions for Elected Members

1. Do elected members have any views or preferences in respect to representation on the SPC?
2. Representatives of which wider Manawatū community groups should be considered as part of the regional spatial plan pre-notification consultation?

Next Steps

Statutory process steps

The next steps are for a draft process agreement to be drawn up with the support of the Interim Secretariat, provided to councils and agreed.

After the process agreement is signed off, the councils of the region will need to appoint members to the SPC (alongside any other representatives of external parties, as provided for by legislation and the process agreement).

Under the Planning Act, the SPC (once appointed) must formally appoint a secretariat. This may or may not be a continuation of the Interim Secretariat (meanwhile, the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport will also appoint their own expert member or advisor to the secretariat).

Upcoming key decisions that will need to be taken

There are several key decisions points for Councils through the establishment phase. These include

1. Agreeing and publishing a process agreement
2. Agreeing and establishing SPC membership and its terms of reference
3. Agreeing to provide a funding package to support the SPC and secretariat
4. Agreeing early communications to partners and communities about the process ahead.

Regional Spatial Plan

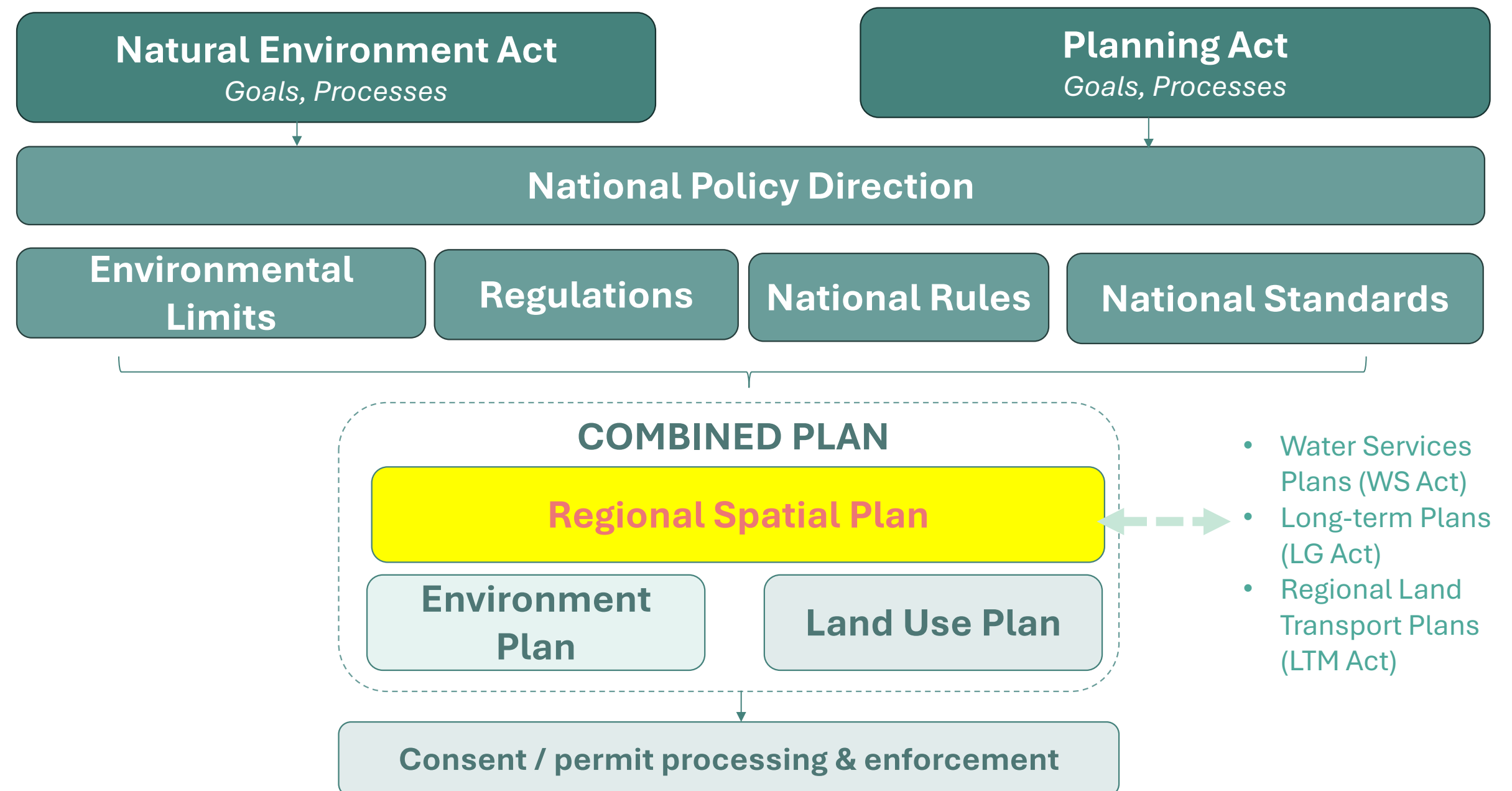
Update on the Manawatū-Whanganui Plan Process

Richard Hills
Senior Policy Planner



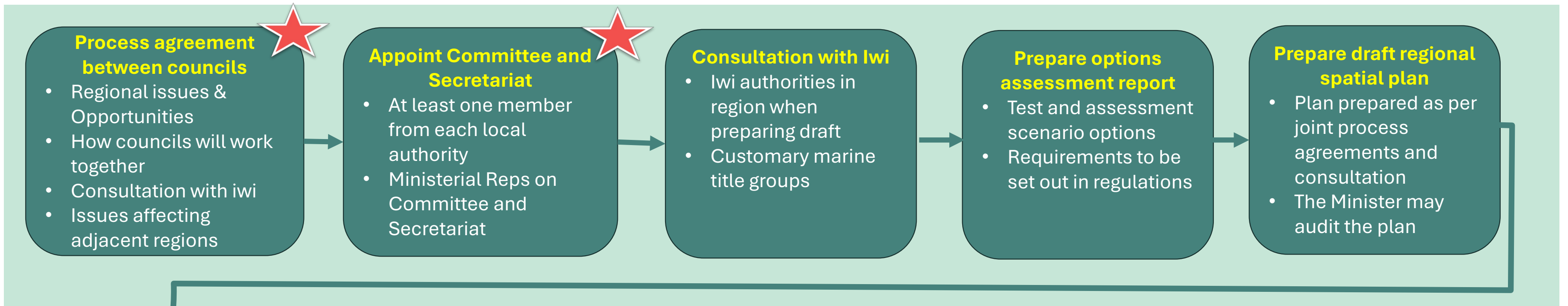
Recap: the role of spatial planning

- **Purpose:** to set the strategic direction for growth and change for the region for the next 30 years
- Must map & record the broad spatial layout for
 - Growth
 - Infrastructure & designations
 - Constraints on using land
 - Māori sites of significance
- Set out the drivers of growth and change
- Resolve conflicts between (government) national instruments

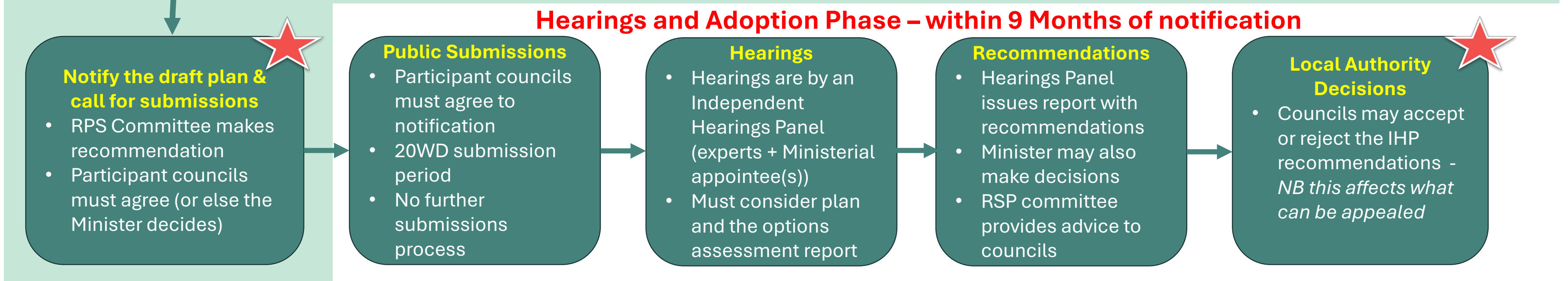


The key process steps

Delivery / Preparation Phase – within 21 Months from Royal Assent

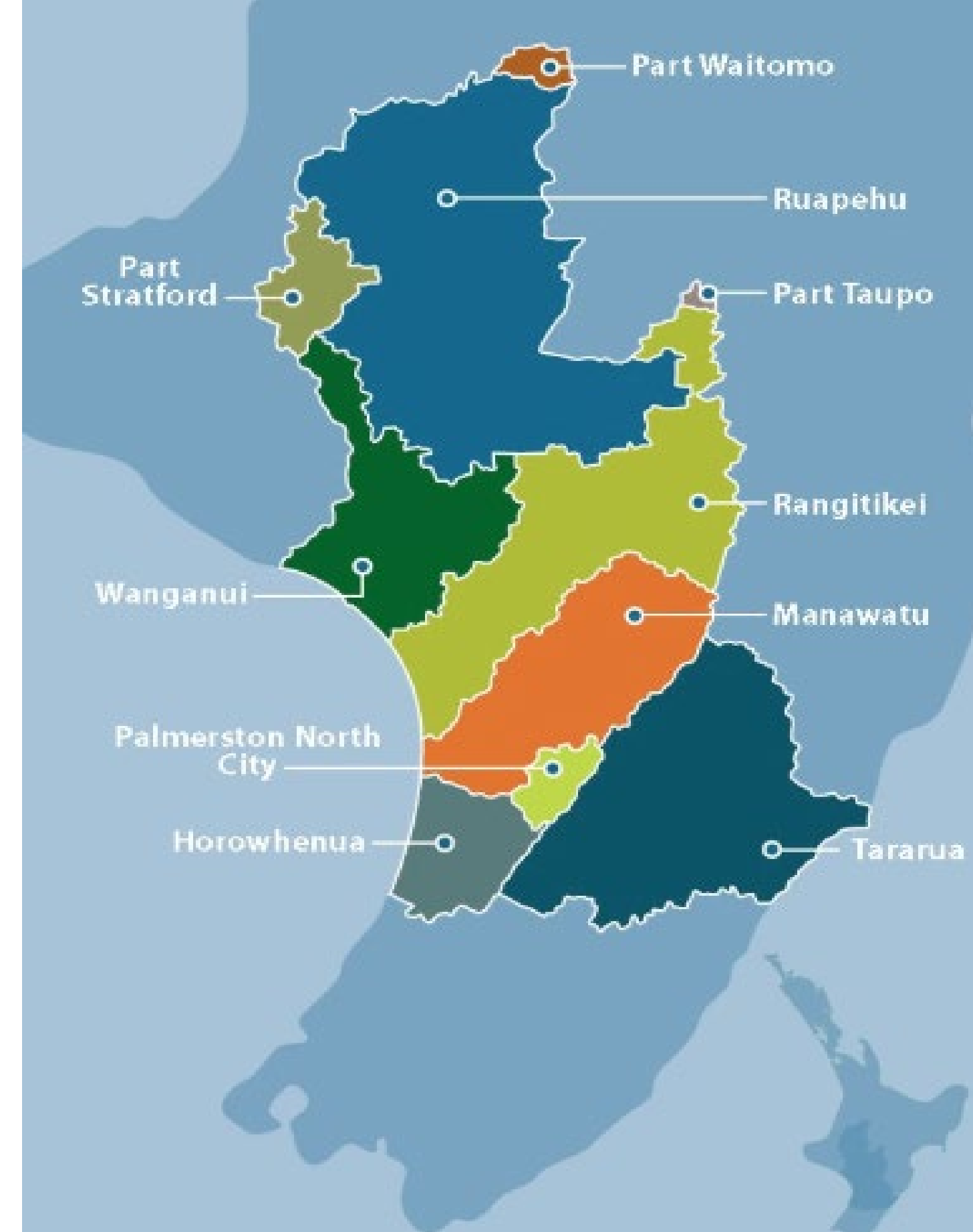


Hearings and Adoption Phase – within 9 Months of notification



Where things are at

- Regional Spatial Plans are a mandatory requirement under the Planning Act (& Natural Environment Act) - **Passed September 2026**
- We have 21 months to notify the first draft – **the clock is ticking**
- One plan per region – with all councils of the region now participating
- Our region is currently working to three-phase preparation approach:
 - **An establishment phase:** August – November 2026 (setting up the RSP committee and a secretariat, along with ‘Process Agreement’ and committee Terms of Reference)
 - **A delivery phase:** December 2026 – June 2028 (plan development through to notification)
 - **A hearings and adoption phase:** – estimated for July 2028 – March 2029



Interim establishment arrangements

- **A regional collaboration of 8 councils**
- Interim arrangements are tasked with:
 - Establishing the RSP Committee
 - Running the interim secretariat
 - Preparing the draft *Process Agreement*
 - Project planning for the delivery of the Plan
 - Options for engaging with Māori
 - Stock takes of data and information for a Foundation Document to assist the Committee
- MDC leads the *Sponsors Group* + shares chairing & organizing duties for *RPPL* (with Rangitikei DC)
- Interim MCERT representative / contact



Impacts

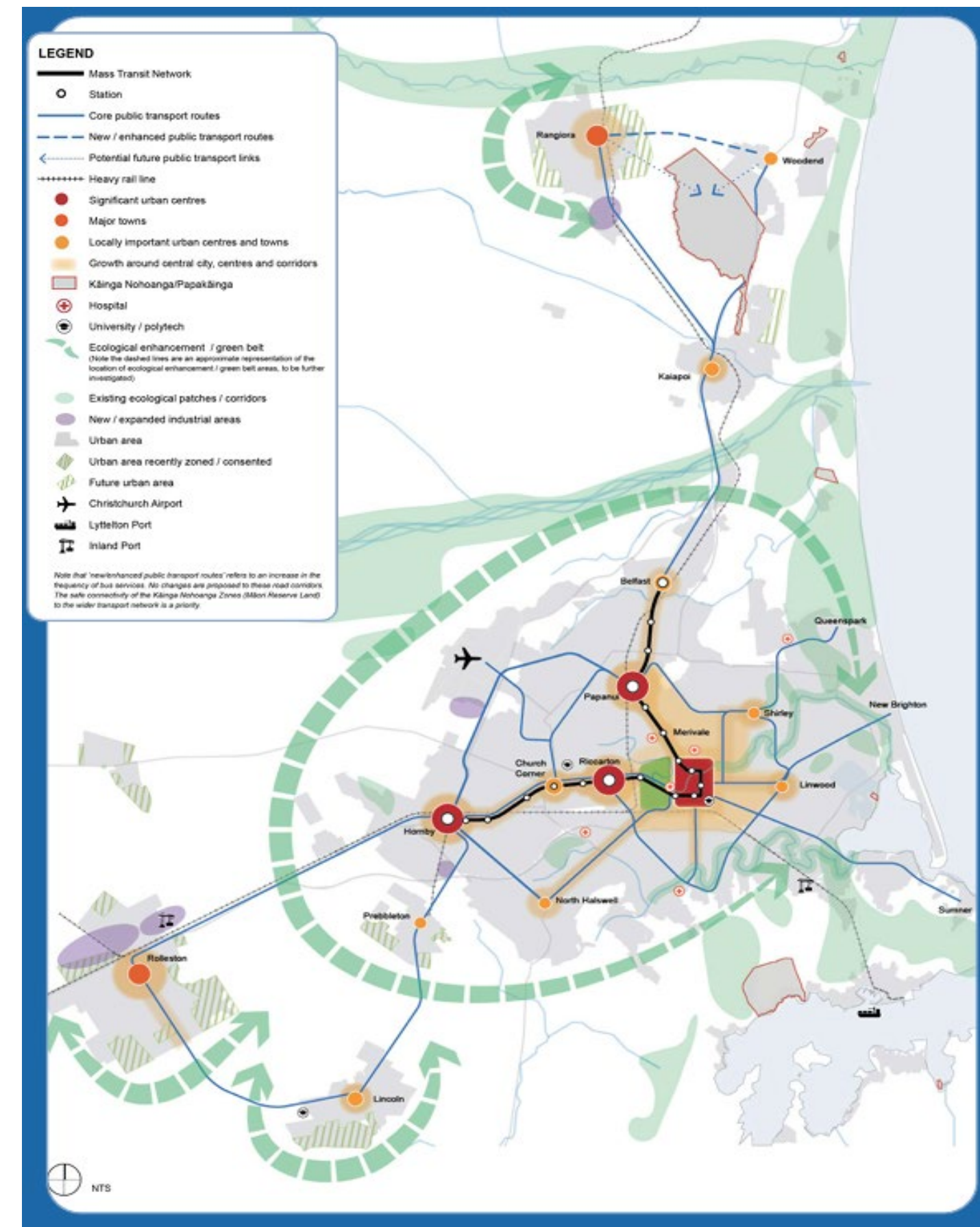
- Council budgetary impacts (*to-date*)
 - Horizons has contributed \$100,000
 - Each territorial authority has contributed \$20,000
 - Resources only cover the establishment phase – Annual Plan and LTPs will need to factor in much larger costs
 - No funding from central government to support councils (or stakeholders) with RSP development

For comparative purposes, the cost of running the secretariat for the Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan was \$755,000 for the 2024/25 year but the total project budget was estimated at \$7-10 million - split between three councils (staff time and internal resources included).

- Council staffing and project impacts – (currently using existing in-house capacity and capability)
 - So far largely limited to CEO and Policy Planning staff time – but resourcing from other MDC teams will be required as work progresses
 - The RMA-related functions of Council must continue until the RMA is finally repealed (2030/2031) – the RSP work is on top of this
- The RSP Committee and Secretariat will need to consider how best to engage / work with external stakeholders

Next Steps

- Key decisions ahead for councils in the Manawatū- Whanganui Region:
 - Agreeing and publishing a process agreement
 - Agreeing and establishing the Spatial Planning Committee (including its terms of reference and membership)
 - Considering and agreeing to provide a funding package to support the Spatial Planning Committee and secretariat
 - Agreeing early communications to partners and communities about the process ahead



Questions